TB

Moneyball

screenplay

by

Steven Zaillian

and

Aaron Sorkin

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TB

FADE IN:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

From high above. Dark, deserted, silent.

We drift across the empty diamond to giant, looming, floodlit likenesses of the Oakland A's premiere players painted on concrete--Jason Giambi, Johnny Damon, Jason Isringhausen.

We move across the stadium to the empty but floodlit parking lot.

Into the frame comes an incongruous sight--a lone Mercedes two-door coupe is driving in a circle around the stadium.

We begin to hear the disembodied cheering crowds and the faint voice of an announcer--

BRENNAMAN (VO)
...one out, nobody on, two and two to Saenz--who has just three at-bats in the series and none of them hits--as he settles back in--

LEGEND:

October 15, 2001
American League Divisional Series
Oakland A's at New York Yankees
Deciding Game 5

BRENNAMAN (CONT'D)
--Rivera looks in for the sign, he has it, the pitch, Saenz swings and--

The announcer's voice and the excited crowd suddenly cut out as we're inside the car. The driver's BILLY BEANE. He's making laps around the stadium.

We go outside the car again and the sound snaps back in--

STEVE LYONS (VO)
--a ground out to second, Thom, is not what the A's were looking for from Saenz down by two in the ninth.

Back inside the car and the sound cuts out. The blackberry on the passenger seat buzzes and BILLY looks at it--

grnd out 2nd--2 out

BILLY keeps driving and we go outside the car as the announcers and the crowd come back in--

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BRENNAMAN
--with the A's down to their last strike and this Yankee crowd is on its feet. Rivera squints for the sign, gets it, delivers--

Back inside the car and the sound cuts out. BILLY's blackberry buzzes. He picks it up, hesitates just a second before looking at it.

fly out cntr.....good season, Billy.

And the sound comes back in--

BRENNAMAN (CONT'D)
--it is Bedlam in New York. The Yankees have come back after losing the first two games to take Division Series from the Oakland A's.

STEVE LYONS
You'd have to go back to the Seattle Mariners in 1985--that was the only other team to win the first two games of a five game series and then lose the next three.

BILLY slows the car to a stop. He puts it in park and sits there.

We go to a high, wide shot of the car sitting alone before we

CUT TO:

THE FACE OF A MAN REGARDING US

And while he may not exactly despise us, he doesn't respect us much either. He seems to be trying to decide if we're worth speaking to and he's leaning toward we're not.

Unlike Billy, this man doesn't look like a ball player and he isn't. He looks like a night watchman, and is, at Stokely Van Camp Pork and Beans Factory.

He speaks--

BILL JAMES
The modern day box score was invented a hundred and fifty years ago by a British-born journalist named Henry Chadwick.

A tintype of Henry Chadwick's face replaces Bill James. He looks like Ulysses S. Grant.

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BILL JAMES (VO) (CONT'D)
Henry, who I'm sure was a nice enough fellow, knew more about cricket than he knew about baseball and so he began counting the things that were easiest for him to count.

Idealized renderings of players on 19th century baseball fields replace Henry's portrait.

BILL JAMES (VO) (CONT'D)
Hits. Batting Average. Earned Run Average. Runs Batted In. Strike Outs.

INT. A'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

There's silence as we move along dented or doorless lockers. Broken bats are lying in pieces on the floor. PLAYERS in various states of dress are sitting silently, not looking at anything or anyone.

BILL JAMES (VO)
And to this day, the value of a player--the decision to draft him or not, to send him from Single-A to Double-A, Double A to Triple-A--

EXT. STADIUM PARKING LOT - NIGHT

BILLY pulls a duffle bag out of the car and unzips it. He pulls out a bunch of bats and clunks them to the ground.

BILL JAMES (VO)
--and Triple-A to the big leagues--to this day those judgements are tethered like a noose to Henry Chadwick's easy to count numbers.

BILLY takes a bat and whacks it against the pavement. He whacks it again. On the third whack, the bat splits apart.

He grabs another bat and whacks it against the ground.

BILL JAMES (VO) (CONT'D)
But baseball's a church and the Church is about to have a tizzy. Because it was only a matter of time before someone felt desperate enough to admit that these numbers...? Measure nothing.

BILLY whacks the bat a second time--and then on the third hellacious slam, the barrel of the bat flies off, end over end, and we HEAR the CRASH of broken glass off-screen.

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BILLY casually turns to see the shattered windshield of his car.

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE:

Part I
Picking Up the Pieces

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Five young men are spread in a line between a pair of orange cones but we can only see their legs--three pairs of black legs and two pairs of white legs--while a 60ish man walks off 60 yards with a pre-measured spool of string.

One of the pairs of white legs belong to YOUNG BILLY.

A few other men in their 50's and 60's stand nearby with stop watches. They have the look of men who spend their entire lives in their cars.

LEGEND:

1980
Major League Baseball Scouting Combine

TOSCANO
My money's on Coles, Harris or Espy.

SABATINI
Picking one of the black kids to win a foot race. Way to go out on a limb.

TOSCANO
Lemme tell you somethin', fatso, Harris is a damn track star, but he's gonna get beat by Coles and Coles just signed a scholarship to play wide receiver at UCLA. Coles is gonna get beat by Espy. That's how fast Espy is. Am I casting a thing on the entire black world? No. Am I saying these particular young black men are going to smoke the two white kids? Yes. And I've got--
(checks his wallet)
--fourteen dollars that says I'm right.

A SCOUT drops his arm as he blows a sharp whistle and the five young prospects take off.

After 20 yards YOUNG BILLY's opened a lead. After 40 yards you could drive a Buick through the daylight that's opened up between BILLY and the four others.

TOSCANO and SABATINI and the other SCOUTS stand there with their mouths open...

TOSCANO (CONT'D)
That was completely unexpected.

MARTINEZ
Billy Beane. Outfielder.

SABATINI
He looks like a baseball player.

MARTINEZ
He's got a face for baseball.

TOSCANO
If he can hit for power he's going in the top five rounds.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

CRACK! A ball sails well over the heads of the SCOUTS in the outfield who are shagging the batting practice flies. The KIDS in the parking lot have seen Billy play before and so know just how far back to stand in order to shag a ball.

BILLY's at the plate, crushing pitches from a pitching machine.

CRACK!--he sends another one sailing over the heads of the cluster of scouts.

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

BILLY, tanned and glistening with sweat, looks over to see THREE GIRLS watching him from behind the backstop. They're looking at him like he's Elvis and BILLY tries to nonchalant it but can't help a small smile to himself before--

CRACK!

CRACK! CRACK!

SABATINI
If he's got an arm he's going in the top three rounds.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

CLANG!

Three oil drum garbage cans are turned on their sides at first, second and third base with the open end facing the outfield.

BILLY takes the next ball that's tossed to him and whips it 200 feet on a frozen rope for a bullseye into the garbage can.

CLANG!

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

CLANG!

CLANG! CLANG!

--dead center into the third base garbage can.

SABATINI
Get him in here.

CUT TO:

EXT. DUGOUT STEPS - DAY

SABATINI and MARTINEZ are talking to BILLY, who's toweling off and is still a little aware of all the people who are standing nearby to watch the birth of a star.

SABATINI
Tell us a little about yourself. It doesn't matter what, we just want to hear you talk.

MARTINEZ
How would you describe yourself?

YOUNG BILLY
Well...I'm affable.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM/PARKING LOT (PRESENT) - NIGHT

BILLY shuts his car door and what remains of the shattered windshield falls away. He's parked in the space reserved for "Billy Beane--General Manager".

TARA (V.O.)
I love you, honey.

CUT TO:

TB

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

BILLY's the only one in the building right now and his second wife, TARA, is on the speakerphone, talking him through this moment with love and humor. BILLY, as a matter of habit, deflects sympathy and plays down pain.

BILLY
That's a really nice thing to say, I appreciate that.

The flat screen on the wall is muted and showing the post-game celebration in the Yankees locker room. PLAYERS and REPORTERS are getting doused with champagne.

TARA (V.O.)
You're not watching them celebrate, right?

BILLY
No. That would be, uh--

TARA (V.O.)
Self-loathing.

BILLY
Yeah.

TARA (V.O.)
What you should be doing is thinking about what an amazing job you did and how great you are.

BILLY
I'll be honest, right this minute I'm not thinking about either of those things.

TARA (V.O.)
You take a team with that payroll to the playoffs? You take the Yankees to a fifth game? I'm not even sure the better team won.

BILLY
They were down two-love and then beat us three in a row. Trust me, the better team won.

BILLY presses a button on the Bose radio that sits on his desk and is hit with sound of sports talk radio--

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CALLER (V.O.)
--while embarrassing the entire city and making a mockery of their fans. I'm *sick* of this.

TARA (V.O.)
You there?

BILLY
Yeah.

BILLY takes his 2001 Oakland A's roster sheet, casually lights it on fire with a Zippo and drops it in the empty trash can. TARA keeps talking over this.

TARA (V.O.)
Here are the rules for tonight. You can do anything you want but you can't give any quotes to the press, go on the internet or hurt my car, we have a deal?

BILLY
Your car?

TARA (V.O.)
You took my car today, you beat yours up last night.

BILLY
Yeah. It's possible I may get into a terrible accident on the way home. I'll survive the accident just fine but there may be damage to your windshield.

TARA (V.O.)
They had three times your payroll, Billy.

From the radio we've been hearing shards of "--an unprecedented choke--", "--get rid of Billy Beane--", "--Billy Beane knows nothing about baseball--".

BILLY
Yeah.

TARA (V.O.)
I hate the Yankees. I hate them like I've never hated anything.

BILLY
I like the musical a lot.

TARA (V.O.)
You're scaring me.

TB

BILLY
(lightly singing under his breath)
You gotta have heart...Oh I wish I had a gun...

TARA (V.O.)
Why don't you come home now.

BILLY
Absolutely.

BILLY deftly yanks the radio's power cord from the wall, steps over the open window and tosses it out without looking.

We hear a louder-than-expected crash.

TARA (V.O.)
Billy?!

BILLY
Hang on.

BILLY leans out the window to see that the radio's made a pretty big dent in the hood of his wife's car.

TARA (V.O.)
(pause)
Did you get into another accident on the way home?

BILLY
Yeah. But it's just the hood and the radio you gave me for Father's Day.

TARA (V.O.)
Don't listen to the radio.

BILLY
Now you tell me.

TARA (V.O.)
They had three times the payroll. God, Steinbrenner can practically--

BILLY
We lost, Tara. And I love you, but the rest is all talk.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

From the logo on the wall we can read that these are the offices of Citations Home Central, but that doesn't really matter.

BILLY sits and waits.

The RECEPTIONIST looks at BILLY...she doesn't have to say anything...BILLY gives her a nod.

After a moment, STEVE SCHOTT, Billy's boss, appears from down the corridor--

SCHOTT
Billy.

BILLY gets up and heads down the corridor. When he reaches SCHOTT, SCHOTT clasps a hand on BILLY's shoulder--

SCHOTT (CONT'D)
Come on in.

They head into--

INT. SCHOTT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

It's a very nice office, and we'll notice that amidst the other knick-knacks are some photos of SCHOTT with the Oakland A's. It's raining outside.

Once the door closes, SCHOTT looks at BILLY--

SCHOTT
Damn, right?

BILLY
Yeah.

SCHOTT
How're you holdin' up?

BILLY
I'm fine. I'm also sorry.

SCHOTT
You don't have to be sorry to me.

BILLY
Come on--

SCHOTT
No--

TB

BILLY
Steve--

SCHOTT
Billy--

BILLY
Okay.

SCHOTT
Well I just wanted to say you had a helluva season and we'll get 'em next year.

BILLY
Thanks, but we're gonna have a problem getting 'em next year.

SCHOTT
Why?

BILLY
We're gonna lose some players.

SCHOTT
Who?

BILLY
Johnny Damon and Jason Giambi for sure and probably Jason Isringhausen.

SCHOTT
We're losing Damon and Giambi?

BILLY
Yeah.

SCHOTT
Where do they rank on the team in terms of RBI's and Runs-Scored?

BILLY
One and Two.

SCHOTT
Really.

BILLY
Yeah.

SCHOTT
Where are they going?

TB

BILLY
Giambi probably to the Yankees and Damon probably to the Red Sox.

SCHOTT
Can we match the offers?

BILLY
The Yankees'll offer Giambi 17-million.

SCHOTT
(beat)
17-million a what?

BILLY
A year.

SCHOTT
Bullshit.

BILLY shakes his head that it's not.

SCHOTT (CONT'D)
You don't pay our whole infield 17-million dollars.

BILLY
I know.

SCHOTT
For 17 million dollars you should be able to get a first baseman and an F-16 Tomcat. What's Damon gonna get from the Red Sox?

BILLY
He's gonna get a lot, Steve, he's gonna get what he's worth.

SCHOTT
Well I'm confident that you'll be able to replace them and Isringhausen too.

BILLY
I need more money.

SCHOTT
You should take a couple of weeks, this just happened.

BILLY
I'm still gonna need more money.

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SCHOTT
Take your wife and go to Hawaii.

BILLY
When I come back from Hawaii I'll need more money.

SCHOTT
I'm saying just relax for a minute.

BILLY
I appreciate that but none of this calamitous week is going to melt away with the spirit of mahalo. I'm trying to beat the Yankees and the Red Sox with a third of their payroll. I need more money, Steve.

SCHOTT
Siddown.

BILLY sits.

SCHOTT (CONT'D)
I'm building some middle-income houses along Jane St.

BILLY
Steve--

SCHOTT
They're nice houses. For what they are, they're nice houses. You know what the faucets cost? It doesn't matter. You turn them on and water comes out. The same water that comes on at my house. It costs a hundred dollars but works just like the one that costs two-thousand.

BILLY
I understand.

SCHOTT
I care what it costs because it's a cost to me.

BILLY
Yes.

SCHOTT
But the family that moves into the house doesn't care what it costs.

TB

BILLY
I get it. Look--

SCHOTT
And they don't care that the counter-tops weren't imported from Italy--

BILLY
(how much longer)
Wow.

SCHOTT
And they don't care that the molding is 2-inches instead of 6-inches and--

BILLY
Due respect, Steve, I'm gonna blow my brains out.

SCHOTT
You don't like my analogy?

BILLY
Your analogy falls apart because the people who move into your new houses know the difference between winning and losing. And so do I. I can't lose anymore. I just--I can't.

SCHOTT
Our house is in Oakland.

BILLY
All of this could have been accomplished by just saying we're a small-market team.

SCHOTT
It's not in New York--

BILLY
But feel free to persevere.

SCHOTT
--or Boston or Chicago or LA or--

BILLY
--other big cities.

SCHOTT
Jason Giambi and Johnny Damon are appointments that are too expensive for our house.

BILLY
You can't ask me to be okay with losing. That's too much to ask a professional athlete.

SCHOTT
You're a professional general manager now. I'm asking you to be okay with not spending money I don't have. And I'm asking you to take a breath and shake off the loss. And then I'm asking you to get the fuck back in a room with your people and figure out how you're going to replace these guys with the money I do have.
(beat)
Got it?

SCHOTT can go from milquetoast to ruthless in a blink and he just did.

BILLY
Yes.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S CONDOMINIUM - NIGHT

BILLY's at the desk in his home office surrounded by scouting reports. They're in stacks on the floor and pinned to the wall but what BILLY's reading is a book.

His wife, TARA, stands there.

TARA
What are you reading?

BILLY
I've been reading this book over and over for years. It's by a guy named Bill James who has very radical ideas about how to predict success in baseball.

TARA
Is he a GM?

BILLY
No.

TARA
A scout?

TB

BILLY
No, he was a night watchman at the Stokely Van Kamp pork and beans factory. He thinks differently than anyone in baseball.

TARA
He's not in baseball, he's in pork and beans.

BILLY
That's true.

TARA
Steve's Hawaii idea doesn't sound bad.

BILLY
I'm sorry, did you want to go to Hawaii?

TARA
In November? Not when I can stay in Oakland, no.

BILLY
(referring to the book)
I understand the fundamental idea of this and it's pretty obvious he's crazy.

TARA
But you've been reading it over and over for years?

BILLY
Yeah, that doesn't make much sense.

TARA
Have the scouts read it?

BILLY
Getting the scouts to read this book would be like getting the Mormon Tabernacle Choir to read the Koran. Listen--

TARA
Yeah.

BILLY
You need to know that if I don't make something happen now I'm going to be fired at the end of this season. That's real.

TB

TARA
Steve told you that?

BILLY
He knew he didn't have to.

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM/SCOUTING ROOM - DAY

BILLY and his scouting department--ten men older than him--all former players who topped out somewhere in the minor leagues--and all tobacco chewers still, each with his own can of Copenhagen and a spitoon--have gathered in this large cinder block room where the appointments are even fewer and cheaper than in Schott's model home.

Two large white-boards dominate a wall, covered with magnetic strips with players' names on them. On the left board is every player in the A's organization. On the right, even larger board, is every player that may be of interest to them from the other organizations.

It's a complex chess board but what can easily be discerned are the obvious holes in the A's team--the star players they're about to lose--whose names are set apart from the positions they're vacating: Jason Giambi (1B), Johnny Damon (CF), Jason Isringhausen (RP).

BILLY
We need to field a winning team for 41-million dollars. Let's go, let's do it. Grady.

GRADY
Let's start with who we like for Giambi. Hoppy?

HOPKINS
Perez. He swings like a man.

TITLE:

November
12 Weeks Until the Start of Spring Training

PITTARO
He swings like a man who swings too much.

HOPKINS
There's some work that needs to be done. He needs to be re-worked a little. But he's noticeable.

GRADY
He's noticeable?

TB

HOPKINS
Noticeable. You notice him.

GRADY
I notice him getting thrown out of games.

HOPKINS
That’s not always a bad thing.

GRADY
Billy?

BILLY
No. It’s just--

KEOUGH
Geronimo. Guy’s an athlete.

HEATH
Doesn’t have a lot of power.

BILLY
No, you’re not--

KEOUGH
Good hitters can develop power. Power hitters can’t develop good hitting.

WHITE
I like him too. If you want to talk about another Giambi, this guy could be it. And if, like you said, we can develop him into--

BILLY
No.

GRADY
So that’s no to Geronimo?

BILLY
No to everything we’re doing right now. Is there another first baseman like Jason Giambi?

GRADY
No.

BILLY
Is there?

GRADY
No.

TB

BILLY
Then let's stop looking for one! We can't do it like the Yankees. If we try to play with them in here we're not going to be able to play with them out there.

GRADY
That's fortune cookie wisdom.

BILLY
No, it's just regular wisdom. Isn't the definition of insanity doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result each time?

GRADY
You haven't heard our recommendations.

BILLY
I'm looking at them and I knew what they were going to be before I looked at them.

GRADY
With all due respect--

BILLY
What!?

GRADY
(beat)
--show me some. We've been doing this a long time.

BILLY
And how's it been going so far?
(beat)
I'm going to Cleveland to trade for Ricardo Rincon. When I get back, right before I beat the shit out of all of you, I want to hear ideas. New ideas about how we can beat teams with three times our payroll. And please remember what I said about not replacing Damon and Giambi with the dinner theater versions of Damon and Giambi. Think differently.

GRADY
I've never been to dinner theater.

BILLY
It's a watered-down version of a Broadway--never mind.

And they go back to work as we

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - CLEVELAND - DAY

Billy's counterpart in Cleveland--Indians General Manager MARK SHAPIRO--35 and about three weeks into the job--sits behind his desk in a tie and shirt sleeves like Billy.

Going almost unnoticed is a young man sitting on the couch. He's in preppy attire and his attention is on his laptop.

SHAPIRO
Where's Steve in all this?

BILLY
Building his houses.

SHAPIRO
What can I do for you, Billy? I want to help out.

BILLY
I need a lefty reliever and I want Ricardo Rincon.

SHAPIRO
This shouldn't be hard.

BILLY
You've got the Venezuelan kid in North Carolina you're bringing up next year, right?

SHAPIRO
You're gonna go back to Oakland with Rincon.

BILLY
Good. I could pay you something or I could show you some of my kids in Midland.

SHAPIRO
You brought tape?

BILLY taps his briefcase--

SHAPIRO (CONT'D)
I'll have a look, sure.
(but then)
Excuse me--

The YOUNG MAN from the couch has come over to whisper something in Shapiro's ear. The GM listens, nods and the Ivy Leaguer returns to the couch.

SHAPIRO (CONT'D)
(to Billy)
Actually no.

BILLY
No what?

SHAPIRO
Rincon's a no. Who else are you thinking about?

INT. INDIANS' FRONT OFFICE - LATER

BILLY comes into a bullpen with many cubicles. He walks through the cubicle maze, looking over the partitions, until he finds the preppy kid from Shapiro's office.

BILLY
Hi.

PAUL
Yes sir.

BILLY
I'm going to talk like this in a congenial way and smile and nod like we know each other and you do the same.

PAUL
Okay.

BILLY
Who the fuck are you?

PAUL
I'm Paul DePodesta.

BILLY
I don't give a shit what your name is.

PAUL
You just asked me who--

BILLY
What are you doing? What do you do?

PAUL
I'm a statistician.

BILLY
I don't give a fuck.

PAUL
Well again, you--

BILLY
You just cost me a left-handed set-up man.

PAUL
I'm sorry about that.

BILLY
You're sorry?

PAUL
I like Rincon.

BILLY
(raising his voice)
You like Rincon? You like Rincon? Who the fuck are you?

PAUL
Paul Depo--

BILLY
I don't care! I have never heard of you. I have no earthly idea who you are. I want to know why Mark Shapiro listens to you.

PAUL
He doesn't most of the time.

BILLY
He just did. So tell me what--

PAUL
I'm in seven fantasy baseball leagues and I win all seven every year.

And now BILLY's stepped off the edge of the world...

BILLY
(long pause)
What?

PAUL
I win at fantasy baseball.

BILLY
(beat)
You win at...?

PAUL
Fantasy baseball.

BILLY's nose to nose with Paul now...

BILLY
(calmly)
Did I misunderstand you or did you say that you're here because you win at fantasy baseball?

PAUL
I do.

BILLY
I'd imagine it's easier when you're playing with fantasy money. You ever play actual baseball?

PAUL
I was the equipment manager at Harvard.

BILLY
(pause)
Wow.

PAUL
Can I give you some advice?

BILLY
Absolutely not.

PAUL
There's no other first baseman like Giambi so I think it's a waste of time to look for the summer stock version.

BILLY
(pause--a little stunned)
That's...What? That's exactly what I said. I said that exact same thing yesterday except I said dinner theater instead of summer stock.

PAUL
Same idea.

BILLY
Yeah.

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PAUL
Yeah.

BILLY's thrown off now...something tells him he wants to keep talking to PAUL but he doesn't want to admit it.

BILLY
(beat)
Some summer stock is good.

PAUL
Some dinner theater is good.

BILLY
Why are you talking to me?

PAUL
Do you understand how conversations work?

BILLY
(pause)
Alright. I'm done here.
(pause)
You're saying statistically there's no first baseman like Giambi.

PAUL
My statistics or your statistics?

BILLY
They're statistics, they're the same.

PAUL
No they're not and that's your problem.

BILLY
I don't have a problem.

PAUL
You don't have Rincon either.

BILLY
I'm leaving.

But BILLY just stands there...

PAUL
(pause)
You're actually just standing here.

BILLY
(pause)
Now I'm leaving.

BILLY exits down the hallway and disappears. The employees step back into their offices but PAUL stays out there.

After a moment, BILLY reappears.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Show me.

INT. OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

The place is dotted with TV's broadcasting basketball games. BILLY and PAUL sit at a booth with a laptop.

PAUL
Losing Damon creates two obvious holes for you: defense in center field and offense in the lead-off spot. Of those two, the offense is the easiest to dismiss.

PAUL opens a file on his laptop and scrolls down a seemingly endless spread-sheet of numbers that looks like The Matrix.

BILLY
What are you running?

PAUL
Every offensive stat from every team in the 20th century.

BILLY
Have you <u>ever</u> kissed a girl?

PAUL
I plugged them into an equation--yes--that correlates them with winning percentage, and there are only two you could say are inextricably linked to baseball success: On-base percentage and slugging percentage.

BILLY
Not batting average.

PAUL
No.

BILLY
Not home runs.

PAUL
No.

TB

BILLY
Strike-outs, doubles, triples--?

PAUL
No. On-base percentage and slugging percentage--

BILLY
Are the only predictors of a team's run scoring.

WAITRESS
Welcome to Outback Steakhouse. I'm Cammi, I'll be your waitress tonight.

PAUL
(answering Billy)
Yes.

BILLY
I'll take any beer you've got on tap.

PAUL
I'd like a Bloomin' Onion and a cherry-vanilla diet Dr. Pepper float.

BILLY
He'll take any beer you've got on tap.

PAUL
I'm pretty hungry.

BILLY
And a Freakin' Onion.

PAUL
Bloomin' Onion.

BILLY
Shut up.

WAITRESS
(cheery for no reason)
Terrific!

The WAITRESS leaves.

PAUL
But contrary to what everyone thinks, they're not equal. An extra point of on-base percentage is worth three times an extra point of slugging percentage.

TB

BILLY
That's your theory.

PAUL
Math isn't a theory but the only person in baseball who takes it seriously is--

BILLY
Bill James.

PAUL
Bill James.

PAUL (CONT'D)
That's right.

BILLY
You've read Bill James.

PAUL
Yes, have you?

BILLY
Yes.

PAUL
Then why don't you take his advice?

BILLY
Because it's not fantasy baseball. It's real games in real stadiums with--

PAUL
Mr. Beane, the only fantasy is that GM's think it doesn't work. And if Bill James had had this software he could've proven it. Look.

PAUL scrolls down his Matrix screen to Johnny Damon.

PAUL (CONT'D)
When Johnny Damon comes to the plate, Oakland fans see a thrilling lead-off hitter.

SUDDEN CUT TO

The back of Johnny Damon's A's jersey as he walks to the plate to adoring Oakland fans.

PAUL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
When I see him, I see an imperfect understanding of where runs come from.

DAMON swings at the first pitch and knocks it into left field for a single. He leads off first--

TB

PAUL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
His on-base percentage in 2001 was .324. That's 10 points lower than league average.

On the next pitch, DAMON takes off for second--

PAUL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
True, he stole some bases. But attempted steals have to succeed 70% of the time before they even start to contribute to run totals.

DAMON's tagged out at second.

BACK TO THE RESTAURANT

The WAITRESS is putting down the drinks and the Bloomin' Onion. BILLY notices that she's written her phone number on his coaster but he's both married and more interested in what Paul is saying.

BILLY
Getting on base.

PAUL
Yes.

BILLY
Is the thing I should care about most.

PAUL
No, it's the thing you should care about to the exclusion of everything else.

BILLY
So you think Bill James is right.

PAUL
Absolutely. And you?

BILLY
I think so. And you understand everything he's saying.

PAUL
Yes. Do you?

BILLY
Yes. Almost. I think so.

PAUL
Let me continue demonstrating.

TB

BILLY
Okay, but definitely keep doing it in that condescending way that reminds me that I never went to college.

PAUL
Sure. You didn't go to college?

BILLY
No.

PAUL
It's impressive you became a GM without going to college.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S CHILDHOOD LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A man hangs up the phone. This is BILLY's FATHER and BILLY's MOTHER is standing by. YOUNG BILLY is sitting at the kitchen table.

DAD
$125,000 as a bonus just to sign. You know what that is?

YOUNG BILLY
A signing bonus.

DAD
Yes, do you know what that is?

YOUNG BILLY
Are you asking me if I know what a signing bonus is?

DAD
I'm asking you if you know what $125,000 is? It's three times what I make every year on a minesweeper.

YOUNG BILLY
So do I go pro or do I go to Stanford?

DAD
You go pro.

YOUNG BILLY
What if I'm not ready?

DAD
You're ready.

TB

YOUNG BILLY
I'm not a hundred percent sure.

DAD
The New York Mets drafted you in the first round. They're sure.

YOUNG BILLY
I understand, but I've been asking myself lately--

DAD
What?

YOUNG BILLY
--if they missed some things.

DAD
The scouts?

YOUNG BILLY
Yeah.

DAD
What do you think they missed? You batted .500 as a sophomore, they didn't miss that.

YOUNG BILLY
I dropped to .300 as a junior.

DAD
Do that the rest of your life and you're in the Hall of Fame.

YOUNG BILLY
Why didn't they care that I dropped 200 points of batting average?

DAD
Sometimes it's just bad luck. Sometimes you hit a rocket right into somebody's glove. Some of those outs were just self-defense.

YOUNG BILLY
78% of the pitchers that I faced my sophomore year I faced again my junior year.

DAD
What does that mean?

TB

YOUNG BILLY
High school kids figured out how to pitch to me.

DAD
You're saying you know more than the scouts.

YOUNG BILLY
I'm just wondering why they didn't see that.

DAD
This is insane. $125,000. Guaranteed money. They're taking Daryl Strawberry with the number one pick, can you play with Daryl Strawberry?

YOUNG BILLY
Yeah, I can play with Daryl.

DAD
Then there it is.

MOM
Can I say something?

DAD
No.

YOUNG BILLY
Sure.

MOM (CONT'D)
The money'll be there in four years.

DAD
What happens if he slips on a banana peel on his way to African-American Studies and breaks his ankle? Or his wrist? Or his knee? Or any of the other body parts that make him worth $125,000? What's smart gonna be worth?

MOM
It'll be worth a lot.

YOUNG BILLY
He's right.

MOM
You don't have to do--

YOUNG BILLY
He's right. If the Mets think I'm good enough--

TB

DAD
Atta boy.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S CONDOMINIUM - NIGHT

BILLY's looking out his window while holding his cordless phone. He's dialed the numbers in and just has to hit the green button.

And now he does.

INTERCUT WITH

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

PAUL's ringing cell phone wakes him up and he answers it.

PAUL
Hello?

BILLY
It's Billy Beane.

PAUL
What time is it?

BILLY
I don't care. Would you have drafted me in the first round?

PAUL
What?

BILLY
After I left you ran me through your computer, right? Would you have drafted me in the first round?

PAUL
You were a good baseball player.

BILLY
Would you have drafted me in the first round?

PAUL
(pause)
I'd have drafted you in the ninth round. No signing bonus. You'd have passed and gone to Stanford.

BILLY
Pack your suitcases.

TB

PAUL
Why?

BILLY
I just bought you from the Cleveland Indians.

BILLY hangs up the phone. He sits all alone for a moment before we

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE:

PART II
This Is So Crazy It Just Might Work

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - MORNING

PAUL is on his knees, surrounded by dozens of stacks of paper that he've arranged in an order that makes sense to only him. There's hardly any part of the floor that isn't covered in paper and this is what BILLY sees when he opens the door.

PAUL
Good morning.

BILLY
(pause)
Okay.

PAUL
Alright--

BILLY
I asked you to do three.

PAUL
Right.

BILLY
To evaluate three players.

PAUL
Yes.

BILLY
And how many have we here?

PAUL
Forty-six.

TB

BILLY
(beat)
Fine.

PAUL
It's fifty-one, I don't know why I lied just then.

BILLY
Who's first?

PAUL
(handing BILLY a piece of paper)
Jeremy Brown, catcher, University of Alabama. Three-hundred hits and two-hundred walks--he led the SEC last year.

BILLY
I've seen Jeremy Brown, he wears a pretty big pair of underwear.

PAUL
He's big.

BILLY
It's not that he's big so much as that he's doughy.

PAUL
Like Babe Ruth?

BILLY
Without the power.

PAUL
You don't care about power from him.

BILLY
(looking at a stat sheet)
300 hits in 1100 at-bats.

PAUL
AND--

BILLY
He walked 200 times.

PAUL
BECAUSE--

BILLY
He's the same height as the Mayor of Munchkin City.

TB

PAUL
No.

BILLY
It says he's 3-feet, 6-inches tall.

PAUL
That's a typo, he's 6-3, I haven't slept yet. You can't back him off the plate, he doesn't mind getting hit in the head with a baseball, he was hit by pitches more than anyone in college baseball last year giving him an OBP of .313 but here's what I really like:

BILLY
He should be coming out of his coma any minute now?

PAUL
His average at-bat is 9 pitches. He may not be able to hit but he can foul 'em off and he's going trough 10% of a pitcher's arm in one at-bat, giving his team an average of 2.3 at-bats against a pitcher other than the starter.

BILLY
His defense?

PAUL
Isn't great, but it's only going to lose you 1.2 games over a 162 game season.

BILLY
While his complete lack of offense...?

PAUL
Is going to win you 6.6 games over the same period but you have to get him to run to second.

BILLY
I'm sorry?

PAUL
He hits what should be doubles but he's afraid to round first 'cause he doesn't like the way he looks when he runs.

BILLY
Are you kidding?

TB

PAUL
He's got the speed, he can make it to second but he's afraid to run.

BILLY
Okay, we'll talk about Jeremy Brown when the draft comes. Right now let's stick with players who can help us right now.

PAUL
I've got 51 of them.

BILLY
Who's first?

PAUL
Mario Munez, an outfielder that's been kicking around Toronto's minor league system. He's exactly--

BILLY
Let me ask you something.

PAUL
Sure.

BILLY
Why--You're not the only computer science major who likes baseball. If what you and Bill James are saying is right--

PAUL
It's right.

BILLY
It <u>sounds</u> right.

PAUL
It <u>is</u> right.

BILLY
If math isn't a theory--

PAUL
It isn't.

BILLY
I'm gonna punch you in the kidneys if you don't let me finish a sentence.

PAUL
I'm sorry.

TB

BILLY
If this is right, why isn't everybody doing it? In fact why isn't anybody doing it?

PAUL
Because it's not what they were taught. Mr. Beane--

BILLY
Billy.

PAUL
I wasn't a computer science major, I majored in psychology with a concentration in irrational thinking and here's on example of it. We know pretty much everything there is to know about meteorology but most people in the most modern country in the world still think an invisible man in the sky decides if it rains. People are nuts. Not in a poetic way, not like a romantic comedy. High functioning people can live their lives under the spell of an inexplicable mental lapse. Then there's another group of people who know that the universe is governed by laws of science but they don't say anything 'cause they'll get in trouble. Are you in the second group?

BILLY doesn't say anything...

PAUL (CONT'D)
This isn't religion, it's a set of facts.

BILLY
I have a boss who cares what the sports writers think. And the fans, and the other owners and I'm not going to be able to get any of them to understand any of this.

PAUL
Not a lot of independent thinkers die of natural causes.

BILLY
That doesn't make me feel better at all.

PAUL
How does losing make you feel?

TB

BILLY
(pause)
Alright.
(intercom)
Suzanne?

SUZANNE (OVER INTERCOM)
Yes.

BILLY
(intercom)
Set up a call with Mike Rogin in Toronto.

SUZANNE (V.O.)
Sure.

PAUL
You're calling the GM in Toronto?

BILLY
Didn't you say that's where Mario Munez was?

PAUL
But I haven't told you anything about him.

BILLY
You will.

PAUL
(pause)
Wait--

BILLY
For what?

PAUL
It hasn't--

BILLY
Yeah?

PAUL
It hasn't--

BILLY
Uh-huh.

PAUL
It hasn't been road tested.

BILLY
Paul, we're doing this. We're running full speed off the cliff because if you go halfway you're just dangling off a cliff.

PAUL
If you go full speed you're falling through the air to your death.

BILLY
Not if you keep running, study your cartoons. You only fall if you look down. Another thing we learn from cartoons? If you hit someone over the head with a frying pan there are two possible outcomes: The frying pan conforms to the shape of your victim's head--OR--the victim's head can withstand the blow and you find yourself vibrating from the impact.

PAUL
You haven't slept either, have you?

BILLY
I have in fact not.

PAUL
Billy--

BILLY
We're in this now, li'l buddy. No more fantasy baseball. Jeremy Brown goes up on the draft board and we get Munez from Toronto. Who's next?

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

TARA's asleep as BILLY tip-toes in quietly. He's come home very late and doesn't want to wake her. He slips off his jacket and quietly places it over a chair.

Then he gingerly heads for the bathroom but catches his foot on the cord from the phone on Tara's dressing table. He dives to catch the phone before it falls and knocks over a lamp which crashes to the ground.

BILLY looks at the wreckage for a moment, then turns to look at TARA, who's sitting up in bed and staring at him.

TARA
(pause)
Really?

BILLY
(quietly)
Sorry.

TARA
It’s been a week since you’ve been home before 2AM.

BILLY
Paul and I are inventing entirely new statistics and assigning them a value relative to how they contribute to wins and losses.

TARA
I’m glad you’ve got a little friend.

BILLY
I think we’re ready for tomorrow.

TARA
Good.

BILLY
But I need you to do something for me.

TARA
Okay.

BILLY
I’d like you to sit down with our books and--looking at the big ticket stuff--the house, car payments, Casey’s school...

BILLY stops because he doesn’t want to scare TARA with what he’s going to ask...

TARA
(pause)
What?

BILLY
(beat)
See how long we can go without an income.

TARA
(pause)
What’s tomorrow?

BILLY
What do you mean?

TARA
You said you think you're ready for tomorrow.

BILLY
The scouts.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM/PARKING LOT - DAY

BILLY pulls into his space and gets out as PAUL comes from his car carrying four cartons piled on top of each other.

BILLY
Good morning. Big day. Did you sleep?

PAUL
Not, no--did you?

BILLY
Don't ask me personal questions.

PAUL
We should spend more time with this before we go in there, we've only been working on it four days.

BILLY
"Change come fast and change come slow but change gonna come."

PAUL
What the hell is that?

BILLY
It's a spiritual, Godless nerd.

They walk in the "Authorized Personnel" entrance and we

CUT TO:

INT. STADIUM CORRIDOR - DAY

BILLY turns a corner onto the corridor with PAUL trailing by a step with his cartons.

PAUL
Maybe you should go in alone.

TB

BILLY
Don't worry about confidence, I'll be your confidence. Like Cyrano. Only not like that at all.

PAUL
Okay, just know that initially you won't get a good reaction from the scouts.

BILLY
I disagree. Most people appreciate being told how wrong they are about the thing they're an expert at.

PAUL
How many of them would you say can beat me up?

BILLY
Easily all of them.

BILLY throws open the door to--

INT. SCOUTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

GRADY, WASHINGTON and the other SCOUTS are sitting around--

BILLY
Good afternoon, this is Paul. Where the hell is Paul?

From the corridor we hear cartons falling to the ground and now we see PAUL in the doorway trying to clean things up as quickly and quietly as possible.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Okay, that's Paul. Lemme hear what you've got.

ART HOWE appears in the doorway--

ART
Billy--

BILLY
Hey.

ART
Can I talk to you a second?

BILLY
I got a lot to do right now.

But ART doesn't back down...

TB

BILLY (CONT'D)
Sure. Out here.

BILLY steps out into the corridor while PAUL puts his cartons down in the scouting room and then tries to be invisible. The SCOUTS are staring at him...

PAUL
(pause)
How are you, it's nice to meet you all.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

ART
Who's the kid?

BILLY
I hired a guy to carry cartons of paper for me, I don't know if he's gonna work out though, I mean you saw what just happened.

ART
I can't manage this team under a one-year contract.

BILLY
Sure you can.

ART
No I can't.

BILLY
Then you'll be sued for material breach.

ART
And that's that?

BILLY
I've got to put a team on the field, then I'll deal with your contract.

ART
How about you deal with the manager's contract and *then* put a team on the field?

BILLY
At the moment, if a ground ball is hit to first base, nobody's going to be there to stop it from rolling.

ART
It’s not like we didn’t win games last year.

BILLY
If you lose the last one of the season nobody gives a shit about the others.

ART
It’s on me now?

BILLY
It’s on me, Art!
(beat)
And the kid’s the new assistant to the general manager.

ART
(pause)
What the fuck are you about to do?

BILLY doesn’t answer the question, just walks back into--

INT. SCOUTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BILLY
Alright, let’s hear it.

GRADY
We have some good ideas for Giambi.

BILLY
Knock me down.

GRADY begins putting names on the board. They’re established but not spectacular first basemen.

GRADY
Which one do you want to talk about first?

BILLY
Hmmmmmm...none of them.

GRADY
You didn’t even look at the board.

BILLY
I don’t have to. Under “1st Base” it says “Cruz, Lillienfield, Wyatt, White and Vasquel.”

WASHINGTON
He got ‘em all.

BILLY
Paul says we're gonna have to win between 86 and 88 games this year to make the playoffs and he says to do that we're gonna have to score 135 more runs than we give up.

GRADY
He's got a crystal ball?

BILLY
He's got a laptop.

GRADY
I've never looked at a computer that can--

BILLY
Yes you have, you just haven't known what you were looking at.

GRADY
Billy--

BILLY
We're gonna change the way we look at <u>everything</u>.

GRADY doesn't know what's going on here but he doesn't like it and he wants to return to more familiar ground.

GRADY
Do we have Rincon?

BILLY
No. We have Bradford.

The SCOUTS start shuffling through their printouts and notes--

BILLY (CONT'D)
I don't think you're going to find him in there. He's a right-hander with the Double-A Charlotte Knights.

GRADY
We need a <u>left</u>-hander.

JOE
And someone who's played major league baseball.

BILLY
We're the Oakland A's, <u>we</u> barely play major league baseball so let's not be snotty.

TB

GRADY
We need a left-hander.

BILLY
Strictly speaking this guy's an underhander.

GRADY
I can't stand the way submariners look.

BILLY
I'll let him know you're not interested in dinner and a movie.

GRADY
What's his velocity?

BILLY
Unimpressive.

GRADY
Can you hit his breaking ball?

BILLY
He doesn't really throw one.

GRADY
Why do you like this guy?

BILLY
Paul?

PAUL
He gets people out.

BILLY
He gets people out.

The SCOUTS don't know who Paul is...

GRADY
Okay. If we could go back to first base. The names on the board--

BILLY
You're still trying to replace Giambi.

GRADY
We have to replace him.

BILLY
No we don't. What we can try to do, though, is recreate him in the aggregate.
(MORE)

TB

BILLY (CONT'D)
(pause)
It means--

GRADY
I know what it means.

BILLY
Giambi's on-base percentage was .477.
Damon's was .324 and Olmeda's was .291.
Add that up you get--

BILLY points at PAUL--

PAUL
(beat)
You want me to speak?

BILLY
When I point at you, yes.

PAUL
Ten-ninety-two.

BILLY
Divided by three?

PAUL
Three-sixty-four.

BILLY
That's what we're looking for and that's what we'll find. Three players whose average OBP is--

Points at PAUL--

PAUL
Three-sixty-four.

JOE
I don't think that's right.

PAUL
It is.

BILLY
It is.

JOE
(on the white board)
What did we say--447 plus 324 plus--

GRADY
Billy--

BILLY
(helping JOE)
Carry the 1.

JOE
Ten-ninety-two. Divided by--

GRADY
Forget about the goddam math!
(meaning Paul)
Who is this?

BILLY
That's Paul.

And that's all he's going to say about Paul for the moment. He's taken three strips out of his bag--

BILLY (CONT'D)
Here's who we want.

BILLY puts the first strip up. It reads: <u>JEREMY</u> GIAMBI.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Jason's little brother Jeremy.

GRADY
I've seen Jeremy Giambi lose a fly ball in the moonlight.

JOE
And he's got a drug bust.

BILLY
If we field a team of only people who've never smoked weed we'll be in danger of being swept by the Yeshiva University Gefilte Fish. Paul?

PAUL
His on-base--

BILLY
His on base percentage is all we're looking at now, and Jeremy gets on base an awful lot for someone who only makes $285,000 a year. David Justice.

GRADY
He's 36.

MACK
And there was the whole problem with Halle Berry.

TB

BILLY
Yeah, let's go crazy and pretend that Halle Berry doesn't play in the American League West and that therefore David Justice's personal life is none of our business. The Yankees'll eat half his salary if someone'll take him off their hands.

GRADY
Why do we want to be the ones to do that?

BILLY points at PAUL--

PAUL
He gets on base.

BILLY
(putting up the third name)
Scott Hatteberg.

HEATH
Who?

BILLY
Exactly. He sounds like an Oakland A already. Six years with Boston, one with Colorado. A very good catching prospect until a ruptured nerve created some problems with his arm.

GRADY
Some problems? He can't throw.

BILLY
We don't want him for his arm anymore than we wanted Giambi for his.

GRADY
Wait, you're talkin' about Hatteberg at <u>first</u>?

BILLY
Yes.

HOPKINS
He's a career .260 hitter and the good part of his career is over.

BILLY
(energizing the troops--sort of)
I say it's just starting.

TB

GRADY
Let me understand. At first base you want a guy who's been cut from half the minor league teams in the country due to irreparable nerve damage that prevents him from holding a baseball in his hand?

BILLY
He can't hit and he can't field, but what can he do?
(beat)
Look at the piece of paper or I'm going to point at Paul.

The SCOUTS consult their spreadsheets and then answer half-heartedly--

SCOUTS
(half-heartedly)
He can get--

BILLY
He can get on base.

GRADY
Alright, he walks a lot.

BILLY
He gets on base a lot, tiny. Do I care if it's a walk or a hit?
(beat)
Paul?

PAUL
You do not.

BILLY
I do not.

GRADY
These three players, by your own admission, are defective in one way or another.

BILLY
Yeah.

GRADY
You want to replace Jason Giambi with not one but three defective players?

BILLY
No, I want to replace him with 14 defective players.
(MORE)

TB

BILLY (CONT'D)
The pitchers we'll get to in a minute. A hitter who can't run, a runner who can't hit, this guy's arm, that guy's power, a quilt of a team built with one purpose. To get on base.

Some of the SCOUTS look over in Paul's direction, no doubt wondering if he's had something to do with this. PAUL gives a half-wave.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Alright, I'm going to explain what we're doing here in terms so plain and clear as to command their assent. You ready?
(beat--then)
Paul, go ahead.

PAUL looks at BILLY and kind of shakes his head to say "I don't know what you want me to say".

BILLY (CONT'D)
Great.
(beat)
I believe scouts make critical mistakes.

And EVERYONE reacts...

GRADY
Is this Bill James bullshit?

BILLY
You can call it Billy Beane bullshit now. And we're going to do it with players who've been undervalued because they do not possess the things that make scouts happy.

GRADY
Athletic talent?

BILLY
In some cases, but mostly...? They don't look like baseball players.

WASHINGTON
Billy, I understand what you're saying about the three averages, but none of the three play first base.

BILLY
Funny you should mention that, Wash, because you're our new first base teacher.
(MORE)

TB

BILLY (CONT'D)
Paul is going to begin the first in a series of seminars right now on exactly what kinds of players we need to be looking for while Wash and I take a road trip.

The SCOUTS react to the word “seminars” much the way you’d expect.

WASHINGTON
Where are we going?

BILLY
To get our first baseman.
(to PAUL)
Make sure you tell ‘em about Jeremy Brown.
(to everyone)
He’s an overweight catcher who’s scared to round first base but he gets hit in the head a lot. If we’re lucky, he could fall right in our laps.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLD COURSE - TACOMA - NIGHT

A wet-greens flag hangs limp against its pole. The windows of the houses that line the fairway are dark. Except one.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A Christmas tree. Four stockings hanging from the mantle. There’s a relentless ticking as we see signs of small children--an Elmo DVD, an American Girl doll--and then some trophies on a bookcase along with several catcher’s mitts and baseballs in lucite display boxes. Finally, the oppressive grandfather clock.

The PARENTS listen to the ticking clock. They’re staring at the phone. The clock chimes midnight and they look to make sure that that’s what time it is. Then back to the phone that’s not ringing.

They regard each other. Neither speaks. When the phone has remained silent long enough to mean bad news, SCOTT HATTEBERG gets up.

SCOTT
I’m going to bed. You should too.

His WIFE nods with a manufactured smile she hopes convinces them both that ‘it’ll be okay’, but neither buys it. As Her washed-up ballplayer husband trudges up the stairs, the phone rings.

He comes back down. Looks at the phone. Looks at his wife. Picks it up.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Hello?

BILLY (VO)
Scott?

SCOTT
Yes?

BILLY (VO)
It's Billy Beane. Oakland A's.

SCOTT was expecting that it would be someone else...

SCOTT
Yes?

BILLY (VO)
Can we talk?

SCOTT
Yes.

BILLY (VO)
You want to invite me in?

SCOTT
What?

BILLY (VO)
I'm outside. I can see you in the window.

SCOTT goes to the window and cups his hands against the glass to see outside.

ELIZABETH
Honey?

Two silhouettes are standing on the edge of the fairway. One of them waves.

INT. SCOTT HATTEBERG'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

ELIZABETH is putting out some cookies shaped like stars and bells for the late-night guests: BILLY and RON WASHINGTON.

BILLY
Thank you, ma'am.

WASHINGTON
Thank you, ma'am.

TB

She leaves her husband with the two men but listens in on their conversation from the next room, nibbling on a cookie of her own.

BILLY
You've played catcher your whole life?

SCOTT
Since I was 8.

BILLY produces a baseball from his windbreaker and hands it to SCOTT. SCOTT can only manage to grip the baseball like a claw. Washington looks to heaven.

BILLY
How's the elbow?

SCOTT
Good. Real good. It's great.
(fuck it)
I can't throw at all.

BILLY
Yeah, don't worry about it. You've thrown your last baseball from behind the plate. I want you at first.

SCOTT is so thrown by this that all he can do is stare at BILLY. Then at WASHINGTON, who's shrug tells SCOTT "This wasn't my idea."

SCOTT
I've only ever played catcher.

BILLY
You're not a catcher anymore. If you were, then mine wouldn't have been the only call you got when your contract expired at midnight.

SCOTT
I appreciate it but--

BILLY
You're welcome.

SCOTT
You see--

BILLY
You don't know how to play first base.

SCOTT
That's right.

TB

BILLY
It's not that hard. Tell him, Wash.

WASHINGTON
It's <u>incredibly</u> hard!

BILLY
Anything worth doing is. Wash is gonna teach you.

SCOTT
Wait a minute, what about--

BILLY
Jason's gone, Scott.

SCOTT
I'm taking Giambi's spot at first? What about the fans?

WASHINGTON
Yeah, maybe I can teach one of <u>them</u>.

BILLY
The fans don't run--
(to WASHINGTON)
--good one--
(back to SCOTT)
--the fans don't run my ball club.

SCOTT
They're gonna hate me.

WASHINGTON
No, they're gonna hate <u>him</u>.

BILLY
The fans love me.

WASHINGTON
No they don't.

BILLY
Deep down.

WASHINGTON
No.

BILLY
Way deep down.

WASHINGTON
No.

TB

BILLY
Okay.

HATTEBERG's YOUNG DAUGHTER comes down the staircase in her pajamas, having just woken up in the middle of the night.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Hello.

HATTEBERG'S DAUGHTER
Hi.

SCOTT
That's our youngest daughter.

BILLY
Great.

SCOTT
Do you have kids?

BILLY doesn't like to share personal lives with the players but he covers well--

BILLY
I have a daughter. She's--yeah, I have a daughter.

BILLY takes a contract out of his windbreaker and sets it on the table next to the cookies.

BILLY (CONT'D)
This is a contract for you to play baseball with the Oakland A's. A copy's on its way to your agent. Discuss it with your wife and let us know.
(They get up and Billy calls off)
Thanks for the cookies, ma'am.

We see ELIZABETH with tears running down her face...then go back to the living room--

ELIZABETH (O.S.)
You're welcome.

BILLY
(on his way out)
Merry Christmas.

EXT./INT. SAN DIEGO HOUSE - DAY

SHARON answers the door.

TB

BILLY
Hi.

SHARON
Hi, Billy.

She opens the door to let him in.

BILLY
Is she home?

SHARON
You think I'm listening to that?

She's talking about the muffled power chords of "London's Calling" coming from a bedroom upstairs.

BILLY
You used to.

SHARON
(calling)
Casey! Dad's here!

Their daughter--a 13 year-old indie-rock girl comes bounding down the stairs and gives her father a huge hug.

INT. SAN DIEGO HOUSE - LATER

CASEY's curled up with BILLY on a couch next to a twinkling Christmas tree. His EX-WIFE and her BOYFRIEND share another couch, holding hands.

SHARON
How's the team shaping up?

BILLY
We lost Damon and Giambi.

BOYFRIEND
I heard. Boston and the Yankees.

BILLY
Yeah.

BOYFRIEND
That's a real torpedo shot to the gut.

BILLY
Yeah.

BOYFRIEND
How does Schott expect you to win?

BILLY
Score more runs than the other team.

BOYFRIEND
Or you could just work for the other team.

SHARON
(quieting him)
Honey.

BOYFRIEND
No one should have to have lived through that nightmare in New York, am I right, Billy? And now your only good players are gone--

BILLY
Players move on.
(beat)
Am I right, Sharon?

SHARON knows he's talking about their marriage...

INT. GUITAR CENTER - LA MESA - DAY

The place reverberates with METALHEAD KIDS mimicking Kirk Hammet on Ibanezes while CASEY tries out a Fender Strat. She very easily fingers through a very tough spray of notes.

BILLY
(genuinely impressed)
Casey.

CASEY
Yeah.

BILLY
You got good.

CASEY
I'm comin' along.

BILLY
The last thing I heard you play was "Blowin' in the Wind", when did this happen?

CASEY
I've just been playing a lot.

BILLY
That's...that's not the way most 14 year olds play. What was that?

TB

CASEY
Queens of the Stone Age.

BILLY
I don't know them.

CASEY
Do you know Nickelback?

BILLY
No.

CASEY
Sonic Youth?

BILLY
No.

CASEY
They were all on the last mix I made you.

BILLY
Sorry.

CASEY
What music do you like?

BILLY
Me? I like the same music I liked in high school.

CASEY
Like Cole Porter?

BILLY
Yeah, 'cause I'm a hundred.

CASEY
I was kidding.

BILLY
Oh. That was dry. No, I like...

CASEY
Who?

BILLY
I didn't really listen to music when I was a kid.

CASEY
Why?

TB

BILLY
Well I was in a weight room from 6 to 8AM, then school, then practice and then a batting cage for another two hours and then homework.

CASEY
You must have listened to something.

BILLY
I liked Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band.

CASEY
I'm sorry I asked.

BILLY
Not cool?

CASEY
Bob Seger? Do you drive a Ford F-150 to your job as a plumbing contractor in Bayonne, New Jersey?

BILLY
I was 16.

CASEY
That's no excuse.

BILLY
Anyway...you've gotten good.

CASEY
David thinks I should have a better teacher.

BILLY
Who's David?

CASEY looks at him--

BILLY (CONT'D)
Mom's David.

CASEY
Dad, I thought he had a point.

BILLY
Maybe, but I think you should keep the same teacher and double his salary.

TB

CASEY
Not that, I meant why not go to a team that has money?

BILLY
Since when do you care about baseball?

CASEY
Dad--

BILLY
Don’t wor--

CASEY
Why not go where there’s more money for players?

BILLY
I could win the Daytona 500 by strapping myself to the roof of the fastest car but I don’t do that either.

CASEY
You were able to hear what you just said, right?

BILLY
It made sense in my head, but my point is don’t worry about me, I have a new way of winning.

CASEY
Really?

BILLY
It may just be a new way of losing.

CASEY
I go on the internet.

BILLY
Don’t do that.

CASEY
I use a screen name.

BILLY
That’s not what I mean.

CASEY
Somebody’s gotta defend you.

BILLY
(a little too strong)
Not you.
(beat)
Nobody has to defend me.
(beat)
Don't go on the internet, I'm not kidding. And don't listen to the radio. Or watch TV or read newspapers. Or talk, you know...to people. I like David. He's a success and he knows it. He's never had a crisis of confidence in his life and he makes mom happy. Listen to everybody but don't ever substitute anyone else's will for your own.

CASEY
You're having a crisis of confidence?

BILLY
I'm talking about your guitar teacher.

CASEY
Are you staying here because of me?

BILLY
There are a lot of reasons to be where I am.

CASEY
Name one.

BILLY
You.

CASEY
Daddy?

BILLY
Yes ma'am.

CASEY
If it's because nobody else wants you, you can say so to me.

And this is about as low as it gets for a grown man and a father...

BILLY
(pause)
Casey--

CASEY
Dad--

TB

BILLY
--if I catch you worrying about me again I'm going to kill you.
(beat)
Or at the very least, trade you. Ask around about me, I'll do it. You're a kid, I'm your father, I worry about you, that's how it works. Do you understand?

CASEY
Yeah.

BILLY
Do you?

CASEY
Yes.

BILLY
You like that guitar?

CASEY
Yes!

BILLY
Merry Christmas.

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

In the subterranean video room--an even less elegant place than the rest of the stadium--someone has put up a scraggly Christmas tree. PAUL watches a tape of a minor leaguer on the Lowell Spinners, a Single-A Boston affiliate. BILLY comes in.

PAUL
How'd it go?

BILLY
He's ours now.

BILLY sits and says nothing, which is uncharacteristic.

PAUL
What's wrong?

BILLY
Nothing. Who's that?

PAUL
Kevin Youkilis. He gets on base more than anyone in baseball except Barry Bonds. I tried to get Mark Shapiro to draft him last June. He said he waddled like a duck.

TB

BILLY
(pause)
Goddamit, Paul, he <u>does</u> waddle like a duck! And this stadium is infested with bees and Scott Hatteberg winces when he tries to hold a baseball!

PAUL
Really?

BILLY
Yes, bees all over the place!
(pause)
Look, there's a difference between losing and being a laughing stock.

PAUL
Is that a distinction you care about anymore?

BILLY
(beat)
You want me to try and get Youkilis?

PAUL
Boston took him.

BILLY
Then what are you wasting my time for?

PAUL
You came in <u>here</u>.

GRADY sticks his head in--

GRADY
Billy?

BILLY
(takes a breath--then--)
Yeah.

GRADY
Can I talk to you a minute?

BILLY
Yeah.

GRADY steps back out--

PAUL
You sure you're alright?

TB

BILLY
Just tell me again quick, without invoking religion this time, why, if we're so right, we're so completely alone.

PAUL
In the mid-19th Century there was a Hungarian obstetrician named Semmelwies--

BILLY
Oh my God.

PAUL
Listen. He demonstrated that if a doctor washed his hands before delivering a baby it would dramatically reduce infant deaths.

BILLY
And nobody believed him?

PAUL
He was ridiculed for 50 years.

BILLY
Alright. Hungarian doctor. Thank you.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GRADY closes the video room door for privacy. The only other person in sight is manager ART HOWE, in his office in street clothes. He shuts his windowed door so Grady and BILLY can talk in confidence.

GRADY
Your boy and I had a talk while you were in Tacoma. I didn't like much of what I heard.

BILLY
No?

GRADY
No. You got a kid in there with a Harvard economics degree and a scout out here with 29 years baseball experience and you're listening to the wrong one.

BILLY
It's actually a degree in irrational thinking.

TB

GRADY
This isn't a fuckin' joke.

BILLY
Alright.

GRADY
This isn't how you put a team together. Scouting's about experience and baseball intuition.

BILLY
There's no such thing as intuition, just facts. You want ballplayers to have a face for baseball.

GRADY
I want 'em to look like ballplayers.

BILLY
Because you've romanticized it and that's what the fans are supposed to do. I'm romantic about winning. And I'm telling you, batting average, home runs, RBI's--

GRADY
--is how people like me and people like me have judged potential for 150 years. People like you too.

BILLY
You have any idea how long people thought the sun revolved around the earth? To your eyes it looks like that's what's happening.

GRADY
You're saying everybody's been wrong? Everybody?

BILLY
(beat)
There was a Hungarian doctor in the mid-19th--

GRADY
Are you saying everybody's been wrong?

BILLY
Yes. Maybe.
(beat)
Yes, and I've thought so my whole life. And now we're gonna see if I'm--

TB

GRADY
--we're gonna see if you're right?! This is about you and your shit? Some scouts from 20 years ago called it wrong, okay? They thought you were a ballplayer and you weren't. As you know, it happens. Don't take it out on--

BILLY
(snapping)
I'm not--
(beat--calmer)
--taking it out on--

GRADY
I'm trying to help, okay, I'm saying--

BILLY
No, you're not saying anything to me right now.
(beat)
Grady, you don't have special powers. You don't have the ability to look at a guy and "just know" because you're a scout with special powers. Your gut makes mistakes and makes them all the time. I've watched you sit at kitchen tables for years and tell the parents of a 17 year old kid, "Trust me, when I know, I know, and when it comes to your son, I know" and you ***don't***. It's mythology. It doesn't have anything to do with "heart" or "wanting it" or romance of any kind. We're shopping in a new store--full of complicated statistical analysis and equations and I get that it all makes you feel useless but--

GRADY
I'm not useless.

BILLY
I said "makes you feel useless".
(beat)
On base percentage. Our best chance to score on our budget isn't getting a 6'4" Adonis to the plate, it's getting a 5'10" washout who's already at first base.

GRADY
(pause)
May I speak?

TB

BILLY
Yes.

GRADY
Major League Baseball and its fans will be happy to beat you and Sancho Panza senseless if you keep doing what you're doing here, I don't give a shit about friendship this situation or the past. Major League Baseball thinks the way I think. You're not gonna win. And I'll give you a nickle's worth of free advice. You're making it impossible for yourself to get another job once Schott fires you after this catastrophic season you're setting us all up for and you're gonna have to explain to your wife and your kid why you're working at Dick's Sporting Goods.

BILLY
I'm not gonna fire you, Grady.

GRADY
Go fuck yourself, Billy.

BILLY
Well now maybe.

GRADY takes off.

BILLY stands there a moment before we

CUT TO:

EXT. A'S SPRING TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

A spring training intra-squad practice game is underway and BILLY and Paul are watching from the side.

BILLY's eyes glance around to the players--the guy in the on-deck circle has a brace on one of his legs, the third baseman is busting out of his uniform, a player standing next to two other players is 5'7".

PAUL
(helping)
Some of them look like baseball players.

BILLY
Should I make a list and get rid of them?

CHAD BRADFORD is walking in from the bullpen. His steps are deliberate and he's counting to himself.

TB

BILLY (CONT'D)
What's Bradford doing?

PAUL
He has to take the exact same number of steps from the bullpen to the mound each time he pitches.

BILLY
(beat)
Okay.

SCOTT HATTEBERG, from his position at first, is keeping the infield warm by tossing them grounders and having them throw back to first.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(calling)
Looking good, Scottie!

SCOTT
(shouting)
Thank you!

And SCOTT gives a wave as a ball flies by him and crashes into the dugout.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

BILLY's years of failure as a player. Each clip features the year and the name of the team and is accompanied by the VOICES of TV or radio ANNOUNCERS dissolving into each other.

EXT. MINOR LEAGUE STADIUM - DAY

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
This is Billy Bean's first at-bat in the Majors. Drafted out of high school in the first round with expectations sky-high...

ANOTHER ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
...taken him a little longer than expected to reach the majors but here he is.

BILLY's at the plate, a batting helmet snug around his head as a 97 mph fastball buzzes by him and the UMPIRE calls--

UMPIRE
Striiike!

TB

BILLY steps out of the box, taps the dirt off his cleats and steps back in.

A woman, SHARON--Billy's first wife--is sitting in field level seats, looking on nervously and trying not to show it.

The PITCHER gets the sign, winds up...

A batter can fly out, ground out, strike out or strike out looking bad and BILLY's just done the last. He half-swings at the breaking ball, holding his swing at the last minute.

The CATCHER and PLATE UMPIRE both point down to first base for the call and the FIRST BASE UMPIRE makes a fist in the air, indicating that Billy swung.

UMPIRE (CONT'D)
Striiike!

And Billy's out.

SHARON holds her head in her hands and BILLY walks back to the dugout, passing a player with "STRAWBERRY" on his back as we

CUT TO:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
...one of two first round picks in 1980 along with Daryl Strawberry, Beane was brought up last year and sent back down after 8 at-bats so here's a second chance as Smith delivers...

BILLY playing for the Minnesota Twins. He swings hard at a pitch and strikes out and we

CUT TO:

LEGEND:

1985

BILLY playing for minor League Jackson. He swings and pops up lamely to the PITCHER, throwing his bat down in frustration as he jogs hopelessly to first and we

CUT TO:

BILLY playing for minor league Tidewater and he grounds out and

CUT TO:

TB

LEGEND:

1986

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
...Billy Beane was actually a much-touted first round pick of the New York Mets in 1980 but the majors have not been kind to him with only 36 plate appearances in three years and this won't doing anything to help him as...

BILLY playing for minor league Toledo and

CUT TO:

BILLY playing for the Minnesota Twins where he comes back into the dug out and throws his batting helmet down and

CUT TO:

LEGEND:

1987

BILLY playing for minor league Portland and a water cooler goes flying across the dugout and

CUT TO:

BILLY playing for the Detroit Tigers and the bat rack gets heaved across the field and

CUT TO:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
...If you're a real baseball fan with a good memory you might remember that Billy Beane was taken in the first round of the amateur draft back in 1980, separated from All-Star outfielder Daryl Strawberry by only 14 picks, so it just goes to show...

BILLY back in a Mets uniform. He stands and watches a called third strike sail past him.

UMPIRE
Strike!

BILLY
(pause--calmly)
Are you fuckin' blind?

TB

UMPIRE
Let's go.

BILLY
(not calmly)
ARE YOU FUCKIN' BLIND!

UMPIRE
Get off the field.

BILLY
IT WAS LOW AND INSIDE, IT PRACTICALLY WENT BEHIND ME!

UMPIRE
Get off the field, Bobby, there's a real ball player waiting to step in.

BILLY
(pause)
It's Billy. Billy Beane.

UMPIRE
Get off the field.

BILLY
(to the catcher)
Was it a strike?

The CATCHER nods his head "yeah"...

BILLY heads back to the dugout, passing STRAWBERRY on his way, who gives him a nod.

BILLY looks up at SHARON in the seats behind the dugout but the two can't quite meet each other's eyes.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

BILLY's sitting alone at his desk and we stay on him for a good four or five seconds before CHAD BRADFORD knocks on the open door.

CHAD
Excuse me, Mr. Beane.

BILLY
Hey Chad.

CHAD
I hope I'm not disturbing you.

BILLY
You're not, what's up?

TB

CHAD
I wanted to say thanks for the opportunity.

BILLY
It’s gonna work out well for both of us.

CHAD
I appreciate the confidence.

BILLY
Listen...Bullpens in American League stadiums are in all different places, I don’t know if you’re gonna get the right number of steps or any--

CHAD
Oh I can do it.

PAUL steps through the open door into the office.

BILLY
(still to CHAD)
You’re superstitious about baseball, huh?

CHAD
I’m a devout Christian, I’m superstitious about bigger stuff than that.

BILLY laughs a little...

BILLY
Does it work?

CHAD
Well nobody ever said I could pitch in the majors but here I am.

BILLY
(pause)
Nobody?

CHAD
Just you, sir.

BILLY
Okay.
(beat)
Get some sleep. Tomorrow’s a day you won’t forget.

CHAD exits. BILLY regards that conversation for a moment. He’s officially in it now.

TB

BILLY (CONT'D)
Tell me again why nobody else--

PAUL
A Jungian psychiatrist in Norway--

BILLY
Never mind.
(beat)
Okay.
(beat)
This is my team. Get a kid in the office to text me after each play.

PAUL
What do you mean?

BILLY
I'll get the pitching chart after. Just text me after each play.

PAUL
Why?

BILLY
I don't watch the games.

PAUL
Is this a joke?

BILLY shakes his head "no". PAUL gestures "What the fuck are you talking about?"

BILLY
I don't know what you're miming.

PAUL
I'm miming "You don't watch the games?!"

BILLY
I don't want to know the players. I've already been in Scott Hatteberg's house and seen his kids and now I've been thanked by Bradford and talked to him about the nature of God---

PAUL
Yeah, that was an intense theological conversation.

BILLY
This is my team. And they're gonna take the field tomorrow.
(MORE)

TB

BILLY (CONT'D)
They’re world class athletes who are fighting for their lives and I stand with them. Except not literally so I need you to have someone text me after each play.

TITLE:

Part III
No. It Turns Out It Was Only Crazy Enough to be Crazy

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

Rock music is pounding from the stadium PA as hordes of FANS go through the turnstiles. A towering portrait of David Justice has been painted where Jason Giambi used to be.

LEGEND:

April 4, 2002
Opening Day

Tickets ripped, programs sold...

EXT. DUGOUT/FIELD/STANDS - DAY

MONTAGE:

The A’s are taking batting practice in the background as some executives have their picture taken on the field with BILLY.

CUT TO:

BILLY greeting some VIP’s in their field-level seats. Throughout this we’ll hear bits of talk radio.

HOST #1 (FROM RADIO)
With the departure of head scout Grady Fuson and a roster that reads more like an obituary page than a baseball team, you have to wonder what Billy Beane is thinking.

BILLY catches a glance of ELIZABETH HATTEBERG taking her seat nearby.

CUT TO:

BILLY shaking hands in the GM’s box.

HOST #2 (FROM RADIO)
He’s not saying.

CUT TO:

TB

BILLY on the field getting a picture taken with KIDS from an area Little League team. He's laughing with the KIDS and being a good host but his eye is caught by one of the kids who's a half-foot taller than the others. BILLY chooses that KID to stand by for the picture and squeezes the KID's shoulder for a moment that says, "You look like the next me and good luck with that."

HOST #1 (FROM RADIO)
Well he can get away with that as long as this house of Tarot Cards stands, but if he fails, as he will, he's not only going to have to answer, he's going to have to answer for it.

CUT TO:

PAUL in his closet of an office listening to the radio--

HOST #2 (FROM RADIO)
He is going to have to answer for it.

PAUL
(to the radio)
Those two things are synonyms, you baritone ass-clown! "Answer" and "Answer for it"? What the hell?!

CUT TO:

The CROWD CHEERS and BILLY watches from the back of the loge as the A's take the field.

Something catches BILLY's attention. He looks in the dugout and sees what he didn't want to see--HATTEBERG sitting on the bench.

BILLY wants to break something but obviously he can't so he swallows it and disappears.

CUT TO:

BILLY's office. He's watching the game on TV with the sound off but we can hear the live crowd in the stadium. CRACK--an LA DODGER hits a three-run homer and BILLY walks out of the room and

CUT TO:

The field. An OAKLAND A hits an easy pop-up to center field and

CUT TO:

The weight room where BILLY's on a stationary bike. His blackberry buzzes and he takes a look--

TB

"Fly out to cntr"

CUT TO:

The field, where ART's walking to the mound. ART looks at the bullpen and touches his right arm and a moment later MAGNANTE comes trotting out of the bullpen.

We see BILLY watching all this from in back of the left field seats. BILLY looks down at the bullpen to see BRADFORD sitting there, not even being warmed up. BILLY turns and leaves and we

CUT TO:

The weight room where BILLY's bench pressing and CRACK--

CUT TO:

--the field where an OAKLAND A's has just hit a ground ball to the SHORTSTOP, who tosses it easily to second base for the first out, and the SECOND BASEMAN throws it over to first for--

CUT TO:

The weight room where BILLY looks at the blackberry which now says--

"643 dbl play"

The blackberry goes crashing into the wall and blows apart.

END OF MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. A'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

It's pretty clear the A's have lost. The TEAM's getting undressed as music plays from a boombox.

DAVID JUSTICE is wandering through and walks up to the soda machine. He checks out the selections, hits a button, and nothing happens. He hits the button again. Then hits a bunch of buttons.

TEJADA
It's a dollar, man.

DAVID
It's what?

TEJADA
It's a dollar.

And DAVID JUSTICE just looks at the machine and mouths "Wow"...

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Bathed in sweat and in better shape than most of his players, BILLY's doing bench presses with a TV showing ESPN's coverage of the A's opening day loss as part of a highlight package. ART comes in.

ART
You wanted to see me?

BILLY
Yeah.

BILLY puts down the weights and grabs a towel.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I should have made you a bigger part of the conversation, that way you would have understood this better and that was a mistake, I take full responsibility.

ART
What are you trying to say?

BILLY
It doesn't matter what moves I make if you don't play the team the way I need them played.

ART
Sir, you are out of your depth.

BILLY
Why wasn't Hatteberg at first?

ART
Because he can't play first.

BILLY
How do you know?

ART
Not my first baseball game.

BILLY
Art--

ART
Scott Hatteberg can't hit.

TB

BILLY
He gets on--

ART
And his defense--

BILLY
Still keeps us in the plus column and we only need to be 7 over 500.

ART
Anything else?

BILLY
(beat)
I would have rather seen Chad Bradford in there at the end than Magnante.

ART
Bradford's--

BILLY
I don't care about righty/lefty.

ART
I do.

BILLY
This is about your contract?

ART
No, you've made it clear what you think about that. This is about you doing your job and me doing mine. Mine's being left alone to manage the beer league team you assembled for me.

BILLY
I didn't assemble them for you, I assembled them for me.

ART
No shit. Part of the conversation? I've heard enough of the conversation and I disagree with you, plain and simple. Moreover, I strongly believe that you're in the middle of experiencing some sort of personal crisis and you seem indifferent to the fact that you're taking a whole organization down with you. I'm playing my team in a way I can explain in job interviews this winter.

TB

ART takes off and BILLY stands there alone for a moment before we

CUT TO:

QUICK SHOTS OVER THE NEXT 11 GAMES--

PENA taking his place at first, HATTEBERG sitting on the bench and cheering the team on, MAGNANTE trotting in from the bullpen, CHAD BRADFORD sitting on the bullpen bench, ground ball out, easy pop up, PENA, PENA, PENA and HATTEBERG on the bench while we HEAR--

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
The A's leave for the their first road trip of the season having dropped 7 of their first 11 games at home and their schedule doesn't get any easier from here. If there's a bright spot it's rookie first baseman Carlos Pena.

And we end on BILLY and his blackberry buzzing...

"grnd out to ss...still 151 gms lft"

BILLY clicks off the blackberry.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

David Justice is sitting next to Paul.

DAVID
How come your boss doesn't travel with the team?

PAUL
He doesn't like to mingle with the players.

DAVID
Makes us easier to cut?

PAUL doesn't say anything...

DAVID (CONT'D)
He's gonna make some moves if we keep losing.

PAUL gives a small "Yeah" shrug...

TB

DAVID (CONT'D)
How come soda costs a dollar in the clubhouse?

PAUL
Billy likes to keep the money on the field.

DAVID
Soda money?

PAUL doesn't say anything...

DAVID (CONT'D)
Where on the field is the dollar I pay for soda?

PAUL
(beat)
It's hard to see.

DAVID
What the hell are you drinking?

PAUL
Cherry Vanilla Diet Dr. Pepper. I travel with my own.

DAVID
I'm done asking questions now.

INT. OAKLAND AIRPORT - DAY

BILLY's waiting for someone. He glances at the front of the sports section which announces "A's Drop 5th in a Row".

He spots CASEY hurrying toward him. He gives her a hug and tosses the paper.

EXT. EDISON FIELD - DAY

DAVID JUSTICE grounds into a double play to end the game.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
And Justice hits into the 6-4-3 double play to end the game...

The ANGELS trot on the field to high-five each other.

INT. DINER - DAY

BILLY and CASEY are having milkshakes. BILLY's phone buzzes. He looks at it. "6-4-3 DP."

TB

BILLY
Excuse me a second, I'm just gonna use the mens room.

INT. MENS ROOM - DAY

BILLY comes in and immediately starts punching the paper towel dispenser until it's completely dented in.

Over the following we hear a cacophony of radio and TV VOICES tumbling into each other--

VOICES (VO)
With the A's getting off to a miserable start/13 of their last 20/17 of their last 25/BillyBeaneMustGo.Com/How much more do we have to endure?/This Jerk/This clown/This jackass/Should be killed/Should be taken out and killed/etc.

CUT TO:

A chair flying across BILLY's office.

CUT TO:

BILLY walking down the street, looking at his cell phone, then kicking over a trash can.

CUT TO:

A computer flying out of Billy's office window.

CUT TO:

A chair being broken into kindling.

CUT TO:

Billy's car driving in circles around the empty Oakland Coliseum parking lot. Baseball bats start flying out of the sun roof.

CUT TO:

INT. OAKLAND AIRPORT - DAY

BILLY is saying goodbye to Casey.

BILLY
Thanks for the mix-tape.

TB

CASEY
Did you listen to the last one?

BILLY
I loved it.

CASEY looks at her dad...

BILLY (CONT'D)
No. I haven't listened to it yet. I'm sorry.

CASEY
Or the one before that.

BILLY
Honey, I promise, I love when you make me a mix.

CASEY
Then why don't you listen to them?

BILLY
(pause)
I don't know. But I will. And I really love--

CASEY
Why don't you just listen to them in your car?

BILLY
Because when I'm in my car I'm listening to--

CASEY
You're listening to talk radio, which you told me not to do.

BILLY
I have to listen to it, I have to know--

CASEY
You have to listen to it so you can make yourself feel bad, that's the only reason. Listen to the very last mix I gave you. You'll like it.

BILLY
Alright. Be good. Say hi to mom.

CASEY
Okay.

TB

BILLY
You're doing it right now.

CASEY
What?

BILLY
You're worrying about me.

CASEY
You're in last place, dad, and you're going to lose your job, what do you want from me?

BILLY
Do I look like I'm worried?

CASEY
Yeah.

BILLY
'Cause you're getting on an airplane and those things crash all the time. Would you please stop worrying about your father? You're a kid, I can't have it.

CASEY
Okay. Can I worry about the airplane now though?

BILLY
Absolutely.
(pause)
I feel like...

CASEY
(pause)
You feel like what?

BILLY
(beat)
I don't know, did we talk enough this time?

CASEY
About what?

BILLY
Anything. Did we talk about the things you want to talk about, did we have fun?

CASEY
(pause)
Yeah.

TB

BILLY
(pause)
Okay. I'm gonna listen to your music, I promise.

CASEY
Okay.

BILLY
Say hi to mom.

There's a slightly awkward moment and CASEY isn't sure whether she's supposed to hug her father again and so they do a sort of half-hug and she goes off through security.

BILLY watches her go, feeling like it was an unsatisfying visit.

BILLY's phone buzzes and he looks at it.

3-2. Magnante in.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(shouting)
I DON'T WANT MAGNANTE IN THERE, ART!

EVERYONE in the area stops to look at the madman.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(to the people looking at him)
No no. I'm alright.

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - EVENING

The A's are taking batting practice. ART, as he always does, is watching not from the railing but from the bench.

BILLY walks into the dugout without saying hello.

BILLY
We're not gonna lose three at home to Texas. I want Dye in right, Justice DH-ing, Pena on the bench, Hatteberg at first and anyone but Magnante first out of the pen.

ART
You want Pena on the bench?

BILLY
That's right.

ART
You want me to bench a player on track for Rookie of the Year.

TB

BILLY
So that you can play Hatteberg.

ART
Who was on track for retirement until you came along.

BILLY
Carlos Pena is a great player--

ART
So naturally we want him on the bench.

BILLY
--but Pena getting voted Rookie of the Year and the A's making the playoffs are two entirely different--

ART
Pena's not just the best first baseman on the roster, he's the only first baseman on the roster and the most valuable member on this team.

BILLY
Pena and Hatteberg have identical batting averages but--

ART
Hatteberg--

BILLY
Listen to me--gets on base 25% more than Pena. 25% more.

ART
His fielding--

BILLY
His fielding doesn't matter.

ART
It does matter and Pena only has one error in 70 games.

BILLY
Not only is that number statistically insignificant but it's also subjective. It measures what someone did against what someone else <u>thought</u> they were supposed to do.

TB

ART
Say it to a psychiatrist exactly like that because your whole life is compared to what somebody else thought you were supposed to do.

BILLY
Okay.
(beat)
Pena and his bat and his glove have to sit to make room for Hatteberg and his On Base Average.

ART
Any manager in baseball would give anything to have Pena starting at first base. That said, I will give strong consideration to your remarkable suggestion that we have a better chance of winning without him.
(beat)
Anything else?

BILLY
(pause)
Yeah. When you sit your ass in the dugout for an entire game you look like Joey Bag-o-Donuts at the dog track. Stand at the railing like a manager.

And if it wasn't already, now it's on. ART pulls himself up off the bench and stands at the railing.

ART
You want me to watch the game the way you do in the parking lot? Or in the weight room, which one?

BILLY looks at ART...nods a simple "okay" and leaves.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - LATER

BILLY's lifting as he listens to the ANNOUNCERS on the TV--

ANNOUNCER
--and Pena taking his position at first base for the A's--

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - LATER - NIGHT

The Rangers bench clears to high-five the PLAYERS coming off the field.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

It's just like any other night as far as JEREMY GIAMBI is concerned. He's got a DVD of "The Natural" playing on a small TV and he's humming along with the score as he gets dressed.

BILLY walks in and it's unusual for the players to see him there.

ART, standing in his office, sees BILLY through the window blinds.

JEREMY GIAMBI isn't aware that BILLY's there--he's into the movie--and shouts--

JEREMY
Go Hobbs!

BILLY
(evenly)
Jeremy?

JEREMY turns to see his boss standing there. The other players are silent and watching.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Is losing fun?

JEREMY
(nervous laugh)
What?

BILLY
Getting swept by the Rangers at home. Is that fun?

JEREMY
No.

BILLY
Then what the fuck are you having fun for?!

JEREMY concedes the point and turns down the movie score a little. He looks over to find BILLY still staring at him. He turns it down some more. BILLY still stares. JEREMY switches it off.

BILLY lets the silence hang for a while...

BILLY (CONT'D)
That's what losing sounds like.

This had just been between BILLY and JEREMY but now BILLY sees the whole room--the whole team--and that EVERYONE is either looking at him or at the floor.

INT. BILLY'S CAR - NIGHT

He sits alone, regretting what he just did. He hits his fist hard against the steering wheel, which then pops off. BILLY looks at it...

BILLY
(pause)
Okay.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

PAUL taps on the open door--

BILLY
What?

PAUL
I wanted to tell you that the guys don't like paying for soda.

BILLY
We didn't factor in user-error. He's playing Pena at first, he's bringing Magnante in first from the pen...I can't fill out his line-up card. I can't stand in the dug out. I can't tell him who to play, there are rules. What?

PAUL
They've got a point. It's a little humiliating and where are they supposed to keep the quarters?

BILLY
I have some suggestions where they can keep the quarters, should I write 'em down?

INT. BILLY'S CONDOMINIUM - LATER

BILLY's laying in bed in his pajama bottoms watching the night's sports re-cap.

COMMENTATOR
When a science experiment fails in a lab, things blow up. When it fails at the Oakland Coliseum, guess what, same result.

The smack down continues on the TV as TARA comes out of the bathroom wearing lingerie.

TB

TARA
Hey.

BILLY
Hey.

TARA
Can I take your mind off the game?

BILLY
You'd really think so, wouldn't you.

TARA
(beat)
Maybe some other time.

BILLY looks at her and takes her in...

BILLY
No.
(beat)
No, not some other time. Look at you. You look like a really expensive call girl.

TARA
Billy--

BILLY
In the good way. I want to have sex. I want to have sex right now. I'm calling Paul.

TARA
(beat)
What?

BILLY
(dialing)
That wasn't the best sentence construction in the world but just--hang on--
(finished dialing)
--you really do look like a thousand bucks an hour.

TARA
I hardly know what to say. Or what to hit you with.

BILLY
(into phone)
Paul?

INTERCUT WITH:

TB

PAUL'S APARTMENT

PAUL
Billy?

BILLY
You should see how good my wife looks right now.

TARA
Oh God--

BILLY
My 14 year old daughter feels sorry for me and my smoking hot wife can't get my attention even though she's really slutted herself up in nice way.

TARA
I'm changing now.

BILLY
I can't tell him who to play but I can dramatically limit his choices.

PAUL
What time is it?

BILLY
It's time to stop losing.

TITLE:

Part IV
She Did Look Good But That's Not The Point

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE CORRIDOR - DAY

BILLY comes down the hallway and PAUL is basically blocking the door to his office.

PAUL
You can't do this, man.

BILLY
The wheels are in motion.

PAUL
Billy--

BILLY
It's gonna be a three-way trade.

TB

PAUL
You can't.

BILLY
I can and I am.
(to his SECRETARY)
Suzanne, let's line up Sabean, Omar and Shapiro.

PAUL
Not yet, Suzanne.

BILLY
Excuse me?

PAUL
Give me one minute.

BILLY
Inside.
(to SUZANNE)
Line 'em up.

BILLY and PAUL go into--

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

BILLY
Give me a mathematical reason why I shouldn't do this?

PAUL
I don't have a mathematical reason but I have a rational one.

BILLY
What?

PAUL
Your life in baseball will be finished. Anywhere--Japan, the Dominican Republic, broadcasting, college--

BILLY
Not if we win.

PAUL
I understand--Look, you have advisers here, can we bring them--

SUZANNE comes in--

SUZANNE
Sabean on 05 and your wife on 04.

TB

BILLY
I can't talk to her now, is she crazy?

SUZANNE
You want to ask her that?

BILLY
(picks up the phone)
Hey leggy, we're kind of in the middle of something.
(beat)
Oh.
(to SUZANNE)
It's my ex-wife.

SUZANNE
I'm so sorry.

PAUL's waiting anxiously--

BILLY
Yeah.
(into phone)
How can I help you?
(listens)
This is really why you're calling?

Another line rings--

SUZANNE
(answering)
Billy Beane's office.
(beat)
Yes.
(to BILLY)
Omar.

PAUL
(quietly to SUZANNE)
Slow it down.

BILLY
You know what, she's 14 now and she can wear whatever dress she wants to the freshmen dance.

SUZANNE
Just reminding you that Sabean's on 05.

PAUL
Can he call them back?

TB

BILLY
(to SUZANNE)
No, keep ‘em right there.
(into phone)
I don’t really think there’s any way I can look at the dress.

SUZANNE
She can e-mail you a picture.

BILLY
(to SUZANNE)
Thank you.
(into phone)
Gotta go.
(hits another line)
Sabes. Lilly, Overmeyer, and I need you to call me back in not more than five minutes with the name of the player to be named later.

Hangs up.

PAUL
You have advisors here, bring them in.

BILLY
The scouts?

PAUL
PR advisors.

BILLY
(forgetting--hits a button on the phone)
Shit. Omar. Sorry. Sabes is back to me in five minutes--this is gonna happen.

BILLY hangs up--

BILLY (CONT’D)
They’re already burning me in effigy, Paul, how much worse can it get?

PAUL
They can burn you <u>not</u> in eff--

SUZANNE
(holding out her blackberry)
She sent a picture of the dress.

BILLY
He gets on base 25% more--

TB

PAUL
In limited at-bats.

BILLY
That's a career stat.

PAUL
Still--

BILLY
We have 45 losses, 14 of them by one run. Hatteberg would have been that run in half those games.

PAUL
That's ridiculous, you don't know that.

BILLY
I know a home run with Hatteberg on base is a two-run homer.

PAUL
A batter gets pitched to completely differently with--

BILLY looks at the blackberry--

BILLY
(into phone)
She's not leaving the house in that dress.

PAUL
(trying)
--with a runner on base and we don't know that he would have been on base. We brought him here to find out. We don't know what Hatteberg'll do. To say nothing of you can't trade a Rookie of the Year candidate.

BILLY
That doesn't have anything to do with winning.
(into phone)
She's a child, Sharon, you handcuff her to a drain pipe is what you do. I've gotta go.

PAUL
You know what else doesn't have anything to do with winning? How you feel about Art, the scouts, the fans or yourself.

BILLY stares at PAUL...SUZANNE hands BILLY the blackberry again--

SUZANNE
I'm sorry.

BILLY
(taking the phone)
YOU CAN'T WEAR THE GODDAM DRESS YOU CRAZY FLOOZIE!

He hangs up and hands the phone back--

SUZANNE
That was your mother.

BILLY
(beat)
Suzanne, would you excuse us just a second? And get Art Howe up here please?

SUZANNE exits.

BILLY (CONT'D)
How I feel about myself?

PAUL
Forget I said that.

BILLY
It was 12 seconds ago.

PAUL
Billy--

BILLY
What'd that mean, Dr. Phil?

PAUL
It just meant that Art doesn't respect you, the fans can't stand you, scouts made you spend 10 years failing and some part of all of that is going into this monumentally dangerous choice you're thinking about making.

BILLY
I didn't hire you so I could lie on your couch for 50 minutes.

PAUL
Please, you sat on my couch <u>before</u> you hired me. "What round would you have taken me in, Paul?"

TB

BILLY
I'm gonna do this now.

PAUL
You can't trade the only star you've got. You'll be completely isolated. You know how long it takes the fans to get over a trade like this? Never. They don't get over it ever.

BILLY
Remember before the first day with the scouts I said I'll be your courage?

PAUL
Yeah.

BILLY
You know what I really meant was I'll be your guts, right?

PAUL
(beat)
Yes I do.

BILLY
I don't think you're worried about my career, Paul, I think you're worried about yours and that's fine.

PAUL
Billy--

BILLY
You want to hop off at the next exit, I'll pick up the phone right now and get you a job with the team of your choice. You want to work for the Yankees?

PAUL
I want to work for you.
(beat)
Asshole.
(beat)
That's the part of my career I'm concerned about. I want to work for you.

SUZANNE (V.O.)
(over intercom)
Sabean on 04.

BILLY picks up the phone--

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

BILLY's in the batter's box in one of his rare plate appearances as an "A" but we're looking at SHARON, in a field level seat with a little girl who's two years old.

SHARON can feel what's coming and it's getting hard to take.

CUT TO:

EXT./EST. COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT - NIGHT

BILLY and SHARON, are sitting up in bed.

After a moment...

SHARON
Have you thought about what you might do if baseball doesn't work out?

BILLY
(pause)
What?

SHARON
That was too abrupt.

BILLY
No.
(pause)
What?

SHARON
(beat)
If baseball doesn't work out. Have you thought about what you might do?

BILLY
(beat)
The game's only been over for three hours, I haven't had that much time to think about it.

SHARON
Sure.
(beat)
Maybe real estate.

BILLY
I'll be honest, if I don't make it in baseball I don't think I'm going to be able to afford much real estate.

TB

SHARON
I meant--

BILLY
I know what you meant.

SHARON
(pause)
It's just a slump, right?

BILLY
(beat)
No.

SHARON
You're saying every scout was wrong?

BILLY
You're kind of saying it too.

SHARON
Billy--

BILLY
Honey...don't you think you should divorce me now while you're young?

SHARON looks at him...then her eyes go to the floor and we

CUT BACK TO:

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE (PRESENT) - DAY

BILLY picks up the phone--

BILLY
(into phone)
Who do you got?
(listens)
Good. Stay there a minute okay?

BILLY puts him on hold.

BILLY (CONT'D)
It's done.

PAUL drops into a chair and covers his head...Then he looks up at BILLY.

The two of them look at each other and the moment's interrupted by ART coming into the office.

ART
Suzanne said you wanted to see me.

TB

BILLY
You can't start Pena at first tonight, you'll have to start Hatteberg.

ART
I don't want to go 15 rounds, Billy, the line-up card is mine and that's all.

BILLY
The line-up card is definitely yours, I'm just saying you can't start Pena at first.

ART
I <u>am</u> starting Pena at first.

BILLY
I don't think so, he plays for the Detroit Tigers now.

ART
(pause)
You traded Pena?!

BILLY
Along with Menechino, Hiljus and Jeff Tam.

ART
You are outside your fucking mind.

BILLY
Maybe so, but I made love to my wife last night and it was <u>great</u>!

ART
(to Paul)
What the hell is he--

PAUL
(sheepish but helpful)
She was wearing lingerie and at first--

ART
(to PAUL)
You went along with this? You agree with this bullshit?

PAUL
(beat)
A hundred percent.

ART looks at them, looks at the floor and then just walks out.

BILLY hits the speakerphone button--

BILLY
Sabes.

SEBEAN (V.O.)
Yeah.

BILLY
I need one more thing.

SEBEAN (V.O.)
I knew this was too good to be true. What do you want?

BILLY
Soda.

SEBEAN (V.O.)
What?

BILLY
I don't want the guys paying for soda--I want you to stock my soda machine for three years and it has to include Cherry Vanilla Diet Dr. Pepper.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

BILLY and PAUL stride through as the team is getting dressed for batting practice.

The place quiets down as BILLY comes in. They've all heard the news and they've never experienced a move like this in their careers.

BILLY
(calling out)
Scottie H.!

SCOTT
Yes sir.

BILLY
Go out and field some grounders.

SCOTT
(beat--terrified)
Yes sir.

BILLY looks around at the PLAYERS, who are looking at Billy...

TB

TEJADA
(pause)
You traded an All-Star. Did you get two in return?

BILLY
No.
(beat)
Everybody? Good afternoon. You may not look like a winning team. In fact, you look nothing like a winning team. But you are one. Play like one. You'll get further instructions tomorrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FIELD - NIGHT

DAVID JUSTICE hits a single up the middle as the runners on 2nd and 3rd round the bases to score.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - SAME TIME

BILLY's blackberry buzzes.

"Sngl up the mdl--2 rns scr"

BILLY
Okay.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

BILLY, freshly showered, is buttoning up his shirt and putting on his tie as he walks through the locker room with PAUL after a win. BILLY's got a fresh sense of empowerment.

BILLY
Three in a row, boys! It's rainin' men, hallelujah.

LONG
Mr. Beane.

BILLY
Billy's fine.

LONG
Billy--

BILLY
Nah, make it Mr. Beane.

LONG
Mr. Beane--

TB

BILLY
I'm screwin' with you, T.

BILLY punches the soda machine and grabs a free soda while the PLAYERS turn to PAUL--

LONG
Paul, Art says no more steals.

PAUL
That's right.

LONG
That's what you pay me to do.

PAUL
Getting on first doesn't matter if you get thrown out at second.

LONG
I don't get thrown out much.

BILLY
(kicking back)
I don't hit 16 at the blackjack table but if I did the odds of success would be roughly the same.

LONG
I don't know where you come up with this stuff.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

This is where he comes up with this stuff. We're watching from outside the office as PAUL draws out a complicated equation on the white board while BILLY studies it and listens, mindlessly playing catch with himself against the wall at the same time.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

CHAVEZ
No more bunts?

PAUL
A bunt is an out.

CHAVEZ
It's a sacrifice out.

TB

BILLY
It’s for pitchers and weak hitters. You’re not a pitcher so what are you telling me?

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLLISEUM - NIGHT

JUSTICE takes off from second on a base hit, rounds third and slides into home.

UMPIRE
Safe!

The A’s win. PAUL pounds his fist from his seat behind the dugout.

INT. BILLY’S OFFICE - DAY

BILLY and PAUL are hard at work. PAUL is talking about something on his laptop while BILLY listens and spins a lacrosse stick in his hands and we

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A team meeting.

BILLY
Walk more.

ELLIS
How much more?

BILLY
At least once every 10 at-bats.

ELLIS
Or?

BILLY
Else.

The jokey atmosphere has given way to silence as EVERYONE realizes BILLY is dead serious.

ELLIS
Walking’s for little bitches, Billy.

PAUL
When we draw more than four walks a game we win.

TEJADA
We got a saying in the Dominican. You don't walk off the island.

BILLY
Tell him our saying, Paul.

PAUL
Triple-A Sacramento's just a strike out away.

BILLY
Have a good game.

Meeting's over. The PLAYERS disassemble in quiet disbelief. Only DAVID JUSTICE Justice sticks around.

JUSTICE
I've never seen a GM talk to players.

BILLY
You've never seen a GM who was a player.

JUSTICE
By player, you mean a guy who didn't make it as a player.

BILLY gives JUSTICE a cool look that says "You really want to do this?"

JUSTICE (CONT'D)
It's okay, man. I know your routine. It's a patter, it's rap, it's for effect. That's okay. But it's for them, it's not for me.

BILLY
You're special?

JUSTICE
You're paying me 7 million bucks so I guess I am a little.

BILLY
As a matter of fact I'm not paying you 7 million bucks, David. The Yankees are paying half your salary. That's what the New York Yankees think of you. They're paying you three and a half million dollars to play <u>against</u> them.
(can't help laughing a little)
That's awesome.
(serious again)
(MORE)

TB

BILLY (CONT'D)
Now if it were me, I'd want to take the three-point-five and shove it up their ass every time I played them. But I'm a fucking competitor. What about you?

JUSTICE looks at BILLY and stalks off.

The synthesized organ intro of The Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again" begins and carries over a montage of the A's winning.

DAVID JUSTICE takes ball four, tosses his bat to the side and trots down to first base.

CUT TO:

TEJADA is on first and taking a big lead toward second. He wants to steal it bad.

ANNOUNCER (VO)
Tejada taking a big lead off first, eyeing the steal--

BILLY, in his car, mutters to himself--

BILLY
Don't do it, Miguel.

And CRACK--a base hit sends Tejada to 3rd.

BILLY's blackberry buzzes:

Sngl to lft. Frst and thrd--nobody out.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Thank you.

The wheels of the team jet lift off--

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

BILLY and PAUL are watching on TV.

BILL KING (TV)
The A's have won seven in a row and 15 of their last 19. You got to hand it to Art Howe. He's managing this unorthodox team in an unorthodox way. They are not bunting. They are not stealing. They are just winning. And Art Howe is the reason.

PAUL
Did you hear that?

TB

BILLY
I heard 7 in a row.

CUT TO:

A graphic of the AL West standings--from the start of the season until now--the teams shifting positions as the "games-out" and winning percentage numbers change like an adding machine, too fast for us to really follow, but then:

The calculations abruptly lock and we're given enough time to understand where we--and Oakland--are after 120 games:

AL WEST	GB	WP
Seattle	---	.610
Anaheim	2.0	.593
Oakland	4.5	.571
Texas	21.5	.427

REPORTER
The A's begin this road trip on an 11 game winning streak, picking up two games on the Mariners and the Angels--

Jacobs Field. TERRANCE LONG leading off first--

ANNOUNCER
2-1 to Hernandez, a stealer's count, so expect Long to be running--

But LONG isn't going anywhere.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Unusual.

Arlington Stadium. JUSTICE at the plate.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
David Justice fights off twelve pitches and gets rewarded with a free trip to first base to lead off the inning.

The standings graphic shows the A's have just moved up into a three-way tie for first place--

REPORTER
Oakland's offense has exploded, scoring 40 runs in their last four games and extending their streak to 14 in a row--

AL WEST	GB	WP

TB

Oakland	---	.619
Anaheim	4.0	.591
Seattle	4.5	.586
Texas	22.5	.450

CHAD BRADFORD smokes the last batter on a called third strike to end the game and the TEAM rushes in to congratulate him--

BILLY looks down at his blackberry, sees the result and makes a small fist pump.

REPORTER (CONT'D)
Who would have thought in April I'd be saying this: The A's head home having won their 17th game in a row, that's two shy of tying the American League record--

INT. LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

BILLY walks through the clubhouse, shouting locker room shoutouts to PLAYERS as he walks by. He knocks on Art's door--something we haven't seen him do before.

ART can see BILLY through the window blinds and is a little surprised at the courtesy of a knock.

ART
Come in.

BILLY does. He's going to try to do this nicely.

BILLY
How are ya?

ART
Good. You knocked.

BILLY
I did, and I hope you take it as a show of respect.

ART
We'll see.

BILLY
You look good.

ART
We've won 17 in a row, what am I doing wrong now?

BILLY
Absolutely nothing.

TB

ART
Good.

BILLY
But.

ART
Yeah.

BILLY
Magnante's having some head problems.

ART
Head problems.

BILLY
Yeah.

ART
Okay.

BILLY
He's 37 and he's got three blown saves in two weeks. Everytime he winds up he's thinking he's about to throw the last pitch of his life. So he grips it a little hard.

ART
I appreciate this.

BILLY
And I appreciate your appreciation.

ART
But I know my bullpen.

BILLY
Yes you do. Yes you absolutely do. No question about it. Except not really.

ART
Yeah?

BILLY
If we have a lead late in the game and they have runners on base, I'd rather not see Magnante out of the bullpen.

ART
I'll make that decision when the time comes.

TB

BILLY
That's what you should do. Baseball's a game of situations and you should make the decision when the time comes. Except you should make it now.

ART
Look--

BILLY
Don't bring Magnante out if we've gotta hold a late lead with runners on. He's 37, he's scared shitless and that whole clubhouse wants this record.

ART
You think a lot of yourself, don't you?

BILLY
I......think the regular amount of myself. Magnante on the other hand, he doesn't think very much of himself at all, and when he tightens up we've got ourselves an adventure. So I'd like to see Chad Bradford out of the pen tonight when we're in, let's say, just to make it easier for you, <u>any</u> situation. Righty/lefty, two outs, no outs, the umpires have decided we're going to finish the game by playing darts, whatever. Bradford's the first guy out of the pen.
(beat)
Okay?

ART
I'll see what I can do, Billy.

BILLY
(beat)
Okay.

ART
I'll see what I can do.

BILLY
You know it's not like it's out of your hands or anything. You're the manager, you don't have to run the decision by a board of directors. You just tell the bullpen you want Bradford and, boom, in he walks. Right to the mound. You hand him the baseball.
(beat)
(MORE)

TB

BILLY (CONT'D)
Magnante's 37, Art. He's pitching scared and--

ART
Got it.

BILLY
Okay.
(beat)
"Got it", you're gonna bring out anybody but Magnante?

ART
"Got it", I'll deal with it when the situation comes up.

BILLY
(beat)
Great. Great. Alright, have a good game.

ART
I could've coached you up, you know.

BILLY
I don't think so.

ART
You think you were that bad a player?

BILLY
(pause)
Yeah, that's what I meant.

BILLY steps out of Art's office into--

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

The game plays on TV as BILLY bench presses. The A's are up by three runs in the ninth inning but Seattle has a runner on first.

Through the tunnel, BILLY can hear the crack of the bat and a collective groan from the stands.

BILLY holds the barbell in the air--frozen--as he simply listens to the TV.

ANNOUNCER (FROM TV)
--solid single up the middle sending Diaz to third. Seattle has runners at the corners with one out and the tying run coming to the plate in the form of Alberto Pedro who's three-for-five tonight against Tim Hudson--

ANNOUNCER #2
Yeah, but that's gonna be all for Hudson as manager Art Howe makes his way to the mound, he's calling in Magnante.

CUT TO:

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - SAME TIME

We think BILLY's going to trash the weights, but he simply returns the barbell to the bracket, sits up and listens.

BACK TO THE GAME--

MAGNANTE mops his brow, squints for the sign, winds up and makes his pitch. It misses low for ball four and PEDRO walks to first.

ANNOUNCER (FROM TV)
Magnante has quickly loaded the bases for Lee Stevens who's the go ahead run for the Mariners in a game that Oakland appeared to have put away.

WEIGHT ROOM - SAME TIME

BILLY sits calmly...waits for it...and--

CRACK!

--BILLY nods his head at the inevitable.

ANNOUNCER (FROM TV) (CONT'D)
That ball is deep....way back...grand slam home run for Lee Stevens to put Seattle ahead in the ninth inning...

BILLY can hear 40,000 people booing their lungs out. He takes a moment, then grabs his jacket.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The FANS are booing as ART makes his way to the mound to take MAGNANTE out. BRADFORD makes his way from the bullpen and takes the ball from ART.

ART turns to head back to the dugout but slows as he sees a strange sight: BILLY is standing at the dugout rail.

The plate UMPIRE notices and follows Art's line of sight. He sees BILLY and walks over there ahead of Art.

UMPIRE
You can't be in there, Billy.

TB

BILLY doesn't move. He just watches ART as he comes into the dugout.

UMPIRE (CONT'D)
Billy?

The PLAYERS are watching to see what's going to happen. BILLY puts his hand on ART's shoulder a second as he says--

BILLY
Just nod a little bit--not too much--like I'm assuring you you didn't just make a calamitous vocational decision.

UMPIRE
Players and coaches only, Billy.

BILLY
Remember that in about four seconds--

BILLY sees one of the nearby TV cameras pivot over to catch this conversation--

BILLY (CONT'D)
--yeah there it is. We're the lead story on Sports Center now so let me be brief. First of all, that was an awfully costly fuck-you, wouldn't you say?

ART
Look--

BILLY
Second of all, genius, those boos? They're for you. Drink up.

UMPIRE
Come on, Billy.

BILLY
Get me this game back.

As BILLY passes MAGNANTE he pats his back before we--

CUT TO:

INT. STADIUM CORRIDOR - NIGHT

BILLY sits on the floor with his back to the wall. He hears a CRACK--then HUGE CHEERS from the fans--and he exhales in relief. His blackberry buzzes--

TB

"18 in a row"

TITLE:

Part V
You Still Have to Win the Last Game of the Season

AL WEST	GB	WP
Oakland	---	.633
Anaheim	3.5	.609
Seattle	7.0	.583
Texas	25.5	.449

A ROCK ANTHEM kicks in and then it's joined by chopper blades as we see

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - EVENING

--where the energy is electric.

LEGEND:

September 4, 2002

REPORTER
This is something special now and far be it for me to jinx it by saying how many consecutive games the A's have won--

REPORTER #2
Nineteen--

REPORTER
Well you said it not me.

Tickets are torn and purses searched as record breaking numbers of fans pour into the stadium.

REPORTER #2
None of the Oakland fans in their cars down there have forgotten the A's inglorious history-making choke in Game 5 of the ALDS last October and tonight--

INT. A'S LOCKER ROOM - EVENING

It's like a tomb. The PLAYERS are getting ready without music or chat.

REPORTER #2
--one game shy of 20 consecutive wins, they have a shot at redemption. How rare is it to win 20 games in a row?
(MORE)

TB

REPORTER #2 (CONT'D)
This rare: No American League team has ever done it.

DAVID JUSTICE sits down next to SCOTT HATTEBERG.

DAVID
What's your biggest fear?

SCOTT
A baseball being hit in my general direction.

DAVID
No, seriously.

SCOTT
Seriously.

INT. CAR - MOVING - EVENING

BILLY heads east on 580. His cell phone rings and he hits the speaker button for the car.

BILLY
Don't tell me the score, Paul.

SHARON (V.O.)
It's me, Billy.

BILLY
How you doin', leggy.

SHARON (V.O.)
Nope.

BILLY
Sharon?

SHARON (V.O.)
You hangin in there?

BILLY
Yeah. I'm not even being texted.

There's silence...

BILLY (CONT'D)
You there?
(beat)
Sharon?

TB

SHARON (V.O.)
(pause)
“Go into real estate”. What a stupid thing to say.

BILLY didn’t even realize until that moment how much he wanted to hear her say that...He’s not sure what to say back.

BILLY
I appreciate that, thanks.

SHARON (V.O.)
Good luck. Casey wants to talk to you.

CASEY (V.O.)
Are you on your way to the stadium?

BILLY
I’m on my way to Vancouver to see the Canadians.

CASEY (V.O.)
What’s so special about Canadians?

BILLY
The Canadians. Our minor league team in Vancouver.

CASEY (V.O.)
Turn the car around and go to the game.

BILLY
No, I really should go to Vancouver.

CASEY (V.O.)
If you really wanted to go to Vancouver you wouldn’t be driving.

BILLY
The airport’s snowed-in in Vancouver.

CASEY
And what happens when I go on the internet and find out it’s not?

BILLY
You can do that?

CASEY
You might make history today, dad. You’re really gonna miss it? Turn around. Call me after the game.

The phone clicks off.

TB

BILLY drives a little longer...letting what Casey said sink in. Then...

BILLY
(to himself)
Shhhit.

...he turns on the radio.

ANNOUNCER (VO)
Tim Hudson is carving through this Royals line-up and at the end of three, it's the A's 11 and Kansas City nothing.

BILLY
(quietly)
Oh God.
(beat)
Ohhhh God.

BILLY sees the sign for the next exit coming up. He makes a decision and quickly crosses four lanes to the right, nearly causing several deaths.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(to the drivers)
Sorry.

The ROCK ANTHEM continues as we

CUT TO:

INT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - LATER - NIGHT

BILLY is striding through an underground corridor which is echoing with the cheers of 55,000 fans. He comes into the locker room and finds PAUL watching the game on TV.

PAUL
You got here fast.

BILLY
Let's go.

PAUL
Where?

BILLY just nods toward the inside of the stadium. PAUL grabs his jacket and the two of them bolt.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

BILLY and PAUL emerge from a tunnel to a sight Billy's denied himself for 138 games: The lit-up ballpark with a game in play.

Unfortunately the idyllic moment is short-lived as TEJADA drops a routine throw from Ellis and a “1” goes up on the scoreboard for the Royals.

BILLY looks down--then turns and disappears with PAUL right behind him.

INT. ART’S OFFICE - LATER

BILLY and PAUL are standing in stunned silence.

ANNOUNCER (VO)
Kansas City’s scored five now and Oakland’s lead is down to six as Art Howe comes out to the mound to pull Tim Hudson.

BILLY
It better be Bradford.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
He’ll go with the submariner, Chad Bradford.

PAUL
(off his computer)
No A’s team has lost an 11 run lead since the Philadelphia A’s in 1936.

BILLY looks at him...

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

We see SHOTS OF FANS in the sold-out stadium experiencing the height of tension and excitement in sports.

CHAD BRADFORD’s done with his warm-up pitches.

CHAD
I know what it is to be in need and to have plenty. I am content. I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength--

INT. ART’S OFFICE - SAME TIME

BILLY and PAUL are just as tense as the fans.

BILLY
Throw strikes.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

CHAD walks the first batter he faces. The crowd grows anxious.

CHAD's first submariner pitch to the next batter, DEE BROWN, hits BROWN in the shoulder. BROWN trots down to first and there are now two runners on.

Some FANS have to cover their eyes.

CHAD manages to get the next batter to hit a slow grounder to short but it gets bobbled and the bases are now loaded.

CUT TO:

INT. ART'S OFFICE - NIGHT

BILLY
What are the odds of losing an 11 run lead?

PAUL
Here's the thing.

BILLY
What?

PAUL
There are forces of negative momentum which act to reduce the differences between strong teams and weak teams.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - LATER

BRADFORD is gone. JEFF TAM is on the mound. JEFF SWEENEY is up and the scoreboard reads "A's:11 Royals:7". Time seems to have altered. Slowed down.

PAUL (V.O.)
The balance of strategies always favors the team which is behind. Psychology always pulls the winners down and the losers up.

INT. ART'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

BILLY watches TAM squint for the sign on TV.

BILLY
But we're the losers.

PAUL
Not today.

BILLY
So because we made bold moves, moved into first place, won 19 in a row and got up 11/nothing we've increased our chance of losing?

PAUL
It's possible.
(beat)
There's a reasonable chance.
(beat)
It's likely.

BILLY
(pause)
Colleges let you major in irrational thinking?!

PAUL
Yeah.

BILLY and PAUL watch the screen nervously...

BILLY
Don't throw the sinker, Tammy, he's waiting for it.

TAM throws a sinker and SWEENEY golfs it over the left field wall.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Sweeny crushes the sinker *DEEP* to left. That ball is gone-goodbye and the Kansas City Royals have come back to tie this game up at 11 a piece. Now I've seen everything.

BILLY's disappeared out of the office. After a moment, PAUL begins to hear the nearby sounds of lockers and equipment being smashed.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - LATER

The scoreboard shows us that it's still tied in the bottom of the ninth. Two outs, nobody on.

ART
Hattie. Grab a bat.

SCOTT HATTEBERG actually points to himself and mouths, Me?

ART (CONT'D)
Let's go.

SCOTT pulls a bat from the rack and makes the long walk to the plate--

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - SAME TIME

PAUL
What the--

BILLY
In this situation? He's sending Hattie to the plate now?!

ART looks at the camera and gives a subversive smile.

PAUL
Art just looked at the camera and smiled.

BILLY
Yeah, that was for me.

BULLY turns off the TV.

PAUL
I'm gonna watch this.

PAUL exits toward the stadium.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - SAME TIME

As ROY STEELE's booming voice echoes:

VOICE OF GOD
Pinch hitting for Eric Byrnes--Scott Hatteberg.

Scott's wife, ELIZABETH, watches from the VIP seats. She clutches her face.

SCOTT lets the first pitch go by.

UMPIRE
Ball!

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - SAME TIME

BILLY's sitting on the floor with his back against the wall. He's just still and looking straight ahead instead of at the screen.

In QUICK FLASHBACKS we see tight shots of BILLY as a player, swinging and missing. "Strike!" "Strike!" "Strike!" "Strike!" "Out!"

EXT. FIELD - SAME TIME

SCOTT steps out of the box to catch his breath. He steps back in and stares at the exact spot in space he thinks the pitch will leave the pitcher's hand.

The pitch. He swings.

Crack! 55,000 erupt. The A's leap to the front of the dugout steps and watch.

We don't see where the pitch goes...

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - SAME TIME

BILLY's still sitting still--he hasn't moved.

Then he hears the roar of the crowd and looks up.

His blackberry buzzes. He looks at it.

"HR Hatteberg. We win."

BILLY just stares at it.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - SAME TIME

The place is going crazy. ELIZABETH is screaming as she watches her husband get mauled by his teammates at the plate.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - SAME TIME

BILLY's still staring at the Blackberry. It buzzes again and the message is replaced by another one.

"What exactly are you doing?"

BILLY turns around and sees TARA standing there.

TARA
Most consecutive wins in AL History.

BILLY
(pause)
I think I broke some stuff.

TARA
Yeah.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The place is packed with players, players' wives, coaches and news crews.

There's no champagne spraying but they feel like they won the World Series and in fact have done something much more rare.

BILLY watches from a distance when SCHOTT calls to him--

SCHOTT
Billy!

SCHOTT's motioning for BILLY to join an interview he's doing. BILLY waves it off. SCHOTT comes over to him.

SCHOTT (CONT'D)
Come do the interview.

BILLY
That's the same guy who wanted to throw me from the Bay Bridge on opening day.

SCHOTT
He's singing a different song now. You know if you gave him a little love he might keep singing that new song.

BILLY
You know if I crushed his larynx he might not be able to sing at all.

SCHOTT
Yeah.

BILLY looks over at ART giving an interview--

ART
Down in Anaheim all they talk about is the manager. Most people don't even know who the general manager is down there. Up here it's like--

ELIZABETH
Mr. Beane?

BILLY looks over to see ELIZABETH HATTEBERG standing next to him...

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I'm Elizabeth Hatteberg. We met at my house last Christmas.

BILLY
Sure.

ELIZABETH
Thank you.

BILLY
Thank me? Thank you. Whatever you put in those Christmas cookies, keep--

ELIZABETH starts to cry--

BILLY (CONT'D)
Whoa. It's okay.

ELIZABETH
I'm sorry.

BILLY
It's alright.

ELIZABETH
You don't know what it's like to have everyone think you're a failure.

BILLY doesn't say anything but of course he does.

BILLY
Well...You never thought that, and that's what's--

ELIZABETH
(the worst possible sin)
I did.
(beat)
And he knows I did.

BILLY takes this in a second...

BILLY
Yeah he does know you did.

ELIZABETH
He's talked to you?

BILLY
No. I just know.
(beat)
That's all over now. Your husband just took a Jason Grimsley two-seam fastball and parked it in the upper deck in left field for a pinch-hit walk-off home run in a record breaking game. Go tell him about it.

ELIZABETH looks at him a moment...and then starts crying again--

BILLY (CONT'D)
No it's okay now, just go.

TB

ELIZABETH goes off to find her husband. BILLY sees PAUL standing there.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Gilligan.

PAUL
Congratulations.

BILLY
(pause)
Let's eat.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S BOX - NIGHT

BILLY, PAUL and TARA are eating hot dogs as they sit facing the empty stadium, their legs up on the ledge.

BILLY
I used to think the worst thing in sports had to be 4th place at the Olympics. You come in 29th and you were just happy to be there. You come in 4th and you were good enough to medal in whatever ridiculous sport you've been practicing 8 hours a day since you were five. You're not the 4th best javelin thrower in the world so if your country ever goes to war in 200 BC...

TARA
What do you think it is now?

BILLY
Hm?

TARA
You said you <u>used</u> to think the worst thing in sports was fourth place at the Olympics. What do you think it is now?

BILLY
Winning 20 in a row and then losing in the playoffs again.

CUT TO:

BILL JAMES

He's in an office now--STATS, INC.--and wearing a coat and tie.

TB

BILL JAMES
Statistics aren't the point. The point is understanding. The point is making sense out of chaos. The point is revealing the true worth of the individual.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

The same shot as at the beginning: the Coliseum from high above, only this time the final game of the division series is being played at home.

LEGEND:

2002 ALDS
Deciding Game 5
Minnesota Twins at Oakland A's

BILL JAMES (V.O.)
I've spent my life arguing with the church but the church doesn't want to change. I've about had it with Baseball.

The camera pans down the huge scoreboard. It's excruciating. The numbers on the board tell us it's been an incredibly close game but the A's are losing by one run in the bottom of the ninth with two outs and nobody on.

And HATTEBERG stands in at the plate.

BILL JAMES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Listen to this. This is Baseball. Listen to what they have to say about a team that won a hundred games for a third of the cost of a team that lost a hundred games. This isn't the voice of some delusional yahoo calling in to AM radio. This is one of the Church's most respected men.

Strike one to HATTEBERG as we hear the venerable voice of ESPN's Joe Morgan, who's speaking post-game.

JOE MORGAN (V.O.)
The flaw in the A's thinking, and this comes from the top of their organization-- is their failure to comprehend you have to manufacture runs in the post season.

HATTEBERG fouls off a pitch. Strike two.

TB

JOE MORGAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You have to steal. You have to bunt. You have to sacrifice. You have to trust in small ball, not Billy Ball.

HATTEBERG doesn't swing at the fastball just on the corner. The UMPIRE pumps his fist to indicate strike three. The PITCHER throws his glove in the air and the CATCHER runs out to the mound as the rest of the Twins run to the middle of the field to begin their victory celebration.

The A's have lost the series.

We move past the pile of celebrating players on the mound to reveal the A's in the dugout...they're frozen...staring straight ahead...

JOE MORGAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They think they've devised a science to win games. They think it resides in a computer.

The sound suddenly cuts out. We continue to move down the dimly-lit cinder-block corridor. In a few moments, the sound comes back on.

JOE MORGAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They thumb their nose at fundamentals. At tradition. At Baseball.

We reach an underground room where a solitary figure bench-presses weights. The TV displays the post-game coverage. Champagne in the winners' locker room and Twins players being interviewed. The MAN lifting weights isn't watching it.

JOE MORGAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They're bean counters in Oakland. That's bean with an "e" at the end. They're card counters at the blackjack table who forget the house always wins.

PAUL
The house <u>doesn't</u> win when you count cards, that's the whole goddam point!

It's PAUL lifting weights, not BILLY.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Don't understand small ball? That's all we played was small ball. Get the runner on first, get the runner on first. No credit for getting this far? Fourth place in the Olympics?

TB

BILLY (OS)
Paul.

PAUL turns around and sees BILLY standing there.

BILLY (CONT'D)
You're talking to yourself.

PAUL
(pause)
I don't know what to say right now.

BILLY
(beat)
I'm gonna talk to the team. Tomorrow I'm gonna make a quick business trip.

PAUL
I know.
(beat)
Good.

BILLY
You know where I'm going, right?

PAUL
Of course.

ALDERSON (V.O.)
This is weird, Billy.

CUT TO:

INT. SANDY ALDERSON'S OFFICE (FLASHBACK) - DAY

BILLY's standing in front of the A's GM wearing his uniform pants and a t-shirt.

ALDERSON
It's like a politician quitting a campaign to become a staffer. Do you even know what a scout does?

BILLY
I've been scouted since I was 15.

ALDERSON
And you're ready to say, "I'm not a baseball player"?

BILLY
I'm not a baseball player.

CUT TO:

EXT. FENWAY PARK - BOSTON - DAY

BILLY's standing on home plate in the middle of this historic park. He hears a voice--

JOHN (O.S.)
Billy Beane!

BILLY turns to see JOHN HENRY, owner of the Boston Red Sox, coming out of the tunnel.

HENRY
Due respect to the Coliseum, but this is a ball park.

BILLY
Yes it is. It is.

HENRY
You ever play here?

FLASHCUT TO:

YOUNG BILLY striking out at Fenway--

BACK TO PRESENT DAY--

BILLY
No.

HENRY
That's a shame. Let's go upstairs.

INT. JOHN HENRY'S OFFICE - DAY

A full view of Fenway out his windows.

JOHN
I'm sorry I kept you waiting. There was snow on 84. The second week in October. Is that global warming or a sign there's no such thing?

BILLY
I don't know.

JOHN
What's that Crosby, Stills and Nash song. "Oh the snow it was falling from Stockbridge to Boston. And the hilltops seemed something because of that frosting."?

TB

BILLY
It’s James Taylor and those aren’t quite the words.

JOHN
Well whatever, it was snowing from Stockbridge to Boston so I’m sorry I’m late. You flew in alright?

BILLY
I did.

JOHN
We’ll have lunch in a little bit. Is coffee okay for now?

BILLY
Sure.

JOHN
Espresso? Cappuccino? Decaf Latte? We’ve got a machine that makes whatever you want, her name is Denise.

BILLY
We’ve got free soda.

JOHN
I heard about that.
(intercom)
Denise, can you bring in some coffee?
(back to Billy)
It’s her birthday. I need to get her a present. What do you think?

BILLY
A nice scarf?

JOHN
Like wool?

BILLY
No I meant something that women wear with--

JOHN
Not the kind that keeps you--

BILLY
No, decorative.

JOHN
Excellent.
(beat)
(MORE)

TB

JOHN (CONT'D)
And where would I get something like that?

BILLY
Look, John, I'm sorry. I just lost in five for the second year in a row, give her a bowling ball for all I care.

DENISE comes in with a tray of coffee and accessories...

JOHN
Thank you, Denise, happy birthday.

BILLY
Happy birthday.

DENISE
Thank you.

JOHN
You met Billy Beane?

DENISE
Yes sir.

JOHN
He thinks I should give you a bowling ball.

DENISE
I don't bowl much.

JOHN
She doesn't bowl.

BILLY
Then this interview isn't going very well.

DENISE exits.

JOHN
The interview's about to get better. I'm offering you the job.

BILLY
I know that.

JOHN
I want you to come be GM for the Boston-- what?

BILLY
I know you're offering me the job.

JOHN
Oh. Then what are we doing here?

BILLY
Honestly?

JOHN
Yeah.

BILLY
Finding out what I'm worth. After that I'm happy to tell you how I'd handle your club.

JOHN
Okay. Well for 41 million you built a playoff team. You lost Damon, Giambi, Isringhausen and Pena and you won two more games without them than you did with them. More than that, the standings in the AL West were in exact inverse proportion to payrolls.

And we begin a slow push-in on BILLY...this is the first person in baseball other than his assistant who doesn't think he's crazy.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I know you're taking it in the teeth. The first guy through a wall always gets hurt. But those are dying voices. Any GM that doesn't tear down their team and rebuild it using your model is gonna show up late to the party.

JOHN writes something down on a piece of paper, folds it once and hands it to BILLY--

BILLY
What's this?

JOHN
What you're worth.

BILLY opens it, looks at it for less than a second, and looks back up at JOHN.

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The lot is completely empty except for the pair of headlights that makes it way through to a parking space.

It's Billy's car and Billy's parking space.

FROM THE RADIO
"...You can't blame Art Howe, he did the best with what he was given. In fact my only problem with Art is that there was a while there he was making Beane-brain look good. He was a wash-out as a player and I don't know why we expected anything more as GM. For the sake of the whole city I'd like to take this guy in a dark alley and--".

He turns the ignition off--cutting off the radio. He just stops for a second.

Then he grabs his bag, gets out of the car, closes the door and--

VOICE FROM THE WINDOW
Heads up.

DOINK!

A baseball hits the hood of his car and he looks up to see where it came from. PAUL is standing in the window of Billy's office.

PAUL
God!

BILLY
What the hell--

PAUL
Sorry!

BILLY
What the hell was that?

PAUL
I was trying to toss you the ball.

BILLY
How bad an equipment manager were you?

PAUL
Congratulations.

BILLY
I'm coming up.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

PAUL's standing there as BILLY comes in.

PAUL
Congratulations.

BILLY
I turned it down.

PAUL
(beat)
What?

BILLY
I turned down the job.

PAUL is staring at BILLY...

PAUL
(pause)
Nobody passes on the Boston--

BILLY
Paul, I think most people around here think you're just the guy who stands next to me and I'm gonna do a better job making sure they know what you do around here. And when I do leave I'll make sure you're the next GM of the A's.

PAUL
You turned it down?

BILLY
Yeah.
(beat)
I thought I just said something kinda nice. You want to hug me?

PAUL
Are you an imbecile?!

BILLY
I think deep down you want to hug me.

PAUL
How could you turn down the Red Sox?!

BILLY
Tell you what, I'll pay for the damage to the car, give you a raise and we'll call it even.

TB

PAUL
You're serious.

BILLY
No, I can't give you a raise.

PAUL
Billy--

BILLY
I'm not gonna live a continent away from Casey.

PAUL
They would have moved. Sharon told me they would move. And your other wife is home packing.

BILLY
Not any more, she's home weeping.

PAUL
Did Henry make you a good offer?

BILLY
It doesn't matter.

PAUL
Did he make you a good offer?

BILLY
It was fine.

PAUL
What was it?

BILLY
It doesn't matter.

PAUL
You don't think there's anyone in the Sox front office I can call right now and find out what the--

BILLY
It's 3 in the morning in Boston.

PAUL takes out his cellphone and starts dialing--

BILLY (CONT'D)
Alright, Gladys Kravitz--

BILLY reaches into his pocket, takes out the folded piece of paper and hands it to PAUL.

PAUL looks at it...

PAUL
He offered to make you the highest paid GM in pro sports.

BILLY
Yes.

PAUL
And you passed.

BILLY
The offer was important. The money was...

PAUL
Huge? A fortune? Impossible to turn down?

BILLY
...redundant. The money was redundant.

PAUL knows exactly what BILLY's talking about. Still--

PAUL
Call John Henry right now and tell him you want to think about it.

BILLY
No.

PAUL
Goddamit--

BILLY
I have to win here.
(beat)
I mean it, Paul, you're gonna be a great GM. You'd be the last person I'd want to play against. And I'll move on and I'll make some money but I have to win here first. I can't leave here a failure.

PAUL
You're not.

BILLY
You win or you lose, P.

PAUL
You haven't given yourself time to get over it, it's only been three days.

TB

BILLY
I'm not even over last year yet. I don't get over it.

PAUL is aware of Billy's deep sadness and decides to show him something...

PAUL
(pause)
I've got something in the film room. Come with me.

BILLY
I really can't look at film.

PAUL
Come with me.

CUT TO:

INT. FILM ROOM - NIGHT

As BILLY and PAUL come in. PAUL's going to show him something on the large flat screen monitor and he picks up the remote.

PAUL
Look closely 'cause you may never see this again. It's not much more than a home movie but you'll get the idea.

BILLY
Who is it?

PAUL
The Visalia Oaks and their 240 pound catcher, Jeremy Brown, who's scared of running to second. This was in a game six weeks ago.

PAUL hits the remote and the tape starts. The quality is poor and the camera is focused only on Jeremy.

The game film will start to fill the whole screen, with only shards of PAUL's silhouette cutting across it to point things out.

BILLY
Was this shot by his mother, I can't see the rest of the field.

TB

PAUL
You don't need to. This guy's gonna start him off with a fastball low and in because he hasn't read the book on our guy and doesn't know that low and in is where he eats. Jeremy takes him to deep center--

We see JEREMY BROWN connect and the ball fly off the bat but the camera stays on JEREMY running to first. PAUL slows down the picture with the remote

PAUL (CONT'D)
--and he knows that if he runs it's a stand-up double and he's running.

BILLY
(quietly)
Go pal.

PAUL
And now he's gonna do something he never does. He's gonna round first base, he's gonna take the turn.

BILLY
Please tell me he's safe at second.

PAUL
No. Because right here--

JEREMY slips and stumbles to the ground.

PAUL (CONT'D)
--is what he's always been afraid of. It's all he can do to get himself back to first.

JEREMY has been scrambling in the dirt to get safely back to first base.

BILLY
What is that?

PAUL
That's the first base coach.

BILLY
Why's he laughing? I'm gonna fire that guy, why the hell is he--

PAUL
Everybody's laughing.

JEREMY's looking around the field now, looking at his own dugout. We can't see what he sees but he's confused.

PAUL (CONT'D)
And now Jeremy finds out why. Watch his face because this is art. He's just found out the ball went 60 feet over the fence. He'd hit a home run but he didn't know it.

And JEREMY's face explodes into a smile. He slaps hands with the first base coach and begins his trot around the bases.

BILLY stares at this. He takes the remote and backs it up a little so he can see Jeremy's face again.

And now, he can't help it but his eyes well up...

PAUL (CONT'D)
(pause)
It was a metaph--

BILLY
I know it was a metaphor.

They watch as JEREMY BROWN runs around the bases.

BILLY (CONT'D)
How can anybody not be romantic about baseball?

PAUL holds out his hand--

PAUL
That was a hell of a baseball season, boss.

BILLY
The Island of Misfit Toys.

BILLY and PAUL embrace each other for a long moment before...

BILLY (CONT'D)
I knew deep down you wanted to hug me.
(beat)
Boston hired Bill James as a consultant.

PAUL
You're kidding.

BILLY
No.

PAUL
I would've followed him around and sharpened his pencils.

BILLY
'Cause you're a nerd. Let's go outside. I want to start making some moves.

PAUL
Sure.

They head to the door.

BILLY
How do you feel about a trade.

PAUL
Who?

BILLY
Art. We trade Art.

PAUL
Yes.

BILLY
Bobby Valentine's done in NY, we send Art to the Mets. A little thank you present.

PAUL
Good. Now there's a Double-A back-up outfielder in Gainesville--

BILLY
We'll talk about him next week, okay man? I'm gonna go see Casey and then I'm gonna take Tara to Hawaii.

PAUL
I'm gonna stay here.

BILLY
I wouldn't expect anything less.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

BILLY's driving along and listening to the sound of a talk show host who hasn't gotten over the A's choke two days ago.

TB

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
I don't blame Art Howe at all, he did the best with what he had, I blame the meat-headed moron who runs this team and while I would never suggest violence--

He reaches in the glove box and pulls out a CD marked "Dad's Mix".

BILLY slips it in the CD player. The sound of the radio immediately snaps off and the momentary silence is soon broken by CASEY's VOICE--

CASEY (V.O.)
Alright, dad. Here's some driving around music I've picked just for you. Don't worry, it's not Nickelback or Queens of the Stone Age.

And then the first track on the CD comes on. Bob Seger's, "Against the Wind".

And BILLY smiles.

He continues on down the freeway into dusk, listening to Seger's anthem to non-conformity as we see the following titles dissolve into one another--

David Justice retired after the 2002 season. He ended up leading the team in on-base percentage and most walks.

DISSOLVE TO:

Scott Hatteberg played three more seasons with the A's, then signed with Cincinnati as a first baseman. He is currently a free agent.

DISSOLVE TO:

Chad Bradford went to the Red Sox in 2005. In 2008 he was traded to Tampa Bay, which went on to the World Series with a payroll lower than Oakland's.

DISSOLVE TO:

Paul DePodesta left Oakland in 2004 to become the General Manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers. He's now with the San Diego Padres.

DISSOLVE TO:

In 2008 the New York Yankees led the league in walks.

DISSOLVE TO:

Billy Beane is still the General Manager of the Oakland A's.

BLACKOUT